

SPRING 2023 | NUMBER 83



## IN THIS EDITION

Catching up with our  
members

From a mud map to an  
oral history project

*Don't Overdue It:* Telling  
Tales with a library  
podcast

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**March, 2023**

**Photo by Madeleine Regan**

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# Editor's Letter

Welcome to the 2023 Spring issue of *Word of Mouth*!

A big thank you to our wonderful contributors, we have some really interesting reads in this edition. Madeleine's piece is a great example of the natural progression of some oral history projects, leading us down exciting paths as researchers. We also have multiple articles that provide some ideas of what to do with these projects we find ourselves undertaking, whether that is a panel event as described by Judy, an exhibit similar to the one in Port Adelaide, or a podcast like the award-winning *Don't Overdue It* from Ricky and Danni.

If you feel as though you have a suitable idea for an article in *Word of Mouth*, please contact us at [editor@oralhistoryaustraliasant.com.au](mailto:editor@oralhistoryaustraliasant.com.au) so that we can share your thoughts and projects in future editions. It is collectively, as the OHA SA/NT community, that we hope to continue filling these newsletters with exciting and relevant content from our valued members.

Happy reading!

Sincerely,  
Dante

*We acknowledge Kaurna 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.

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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The views expressed in *Word of Mouth* are not necessarily those of Oral History Australia (SA/NT Association) Inc.

# President's Report

David Sweet

This is a slightly abridged version of my annual report to the 2023 AGM, at the Holocaust Museum and online. It is interesting how COVID-19 continues to affect people's commitment and while AGMs are never high priority for members unless there is significant conflict, unfortunately many volunteer organisations are similarly struggling. In my previous report to the 2022 AGM, I noted that the history sector in SA and NT, and for other organisations similar to us, have been impacted by lower membership, participation, and attendance at activities. This is, and continues to be, a focus for our Association here and in the Northern Territory.

## Acknowledgements

Firstly, I wish to thank the wonderful and supportive committee. The year started on a high note with a strong contingent from SA/NT attending the brilliant National Conference in Launceston, Tasmania in October 2022. However, I came home to almost a fortnight in the RAH (including five-hour ramping) and the next six months significantly limited in any physical activities, including being unable to speak for more than a few minutes at a time. Some might say that is a blessing.

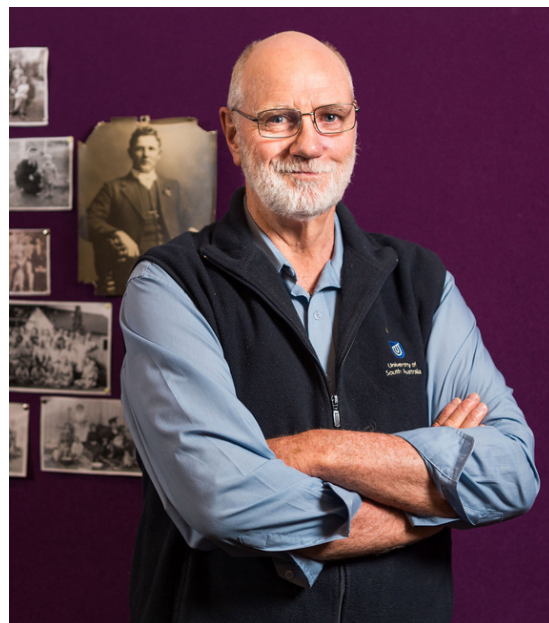
However, your committee made me (almost) redundant and carried on with marvellous results. To each of them, my sincere thank you. The country members, Christeen Schoepf and Judy Bailey in SA, and William Martin who continues his interesting work with the indigenous communities in the outback of The Territory, Sally Stephenson and Karen McDonough from the Adelaide Hills, Dianne Korare our Secretary, and Carolyn Collins with the detailed role of Treasurer.

As many would know, Enid Woodley, the State Library of South Australia representative, has been ill for some time and on behalf of everyone our thoughts are with her. I wish her a speedy recovery. I am saddened to advise that Karen McDonough is retiring from the committee; I will miss the support and involvement she has given over many years. Thank you, Karen.

## Communications

This is the second edition of *Word of Mouth* after the unfortunate hiatus in 2021. Karen's persuasion arranged for Dante DeBono and Carly Heinrich, two UniSA PhD candidates, to become joint editors. The 82nd edition of *WoM* was an outstanding success and filled with marvellous articles.

Thank you to our web and social media guru, Judy, for managing the internet communications, email, and our web page. Changes are in planning and Judy will be working on these with a collective of Victoria, Tasmania, and Western Australia. It is in the initial planning stage and the new committee will



Dr David Sweet, photo supplied

be in position to review any changes. The rationale is to keep our webpages simple and standardised. Where necessary, the site will use information from the National website as it is updated more regularly and it will then automatically flow through to the States. Victoria will be first to change as it will incorporate the 2024 Conference details.

There will be opportunities to have SA content reviewed, which could be part of a working group of the committee to make decisions, when the bare bones of the new website are available. Certainly, feedback from all members is welcome when there is a draft of the new website. The target for SA/NT is end of 2023—significant set up will be undertaken by the designer using WordPress.

As I reported last year, our immediate past President, Annmarie Reid, and I had been working on the digitisation of all copies of *WoM*. COVID-19 and costs were an issue, however, I am in discussions with a provider for a staged approach to the project. Once I have further details, I will take this to the committee for its consideration.

### **Promotion**

In 2022, the inaugural Excellence in Oral History Award was launched as part of the History Council of SA annual History Awards in conjunction with the History Festival and the History Trust of SA. According to the judges, the quality of the submissions this year made their decision a challenge. The winner(s) were Ricky Koopman and Danni Reade from the Mount Gambier Library.

### **Grants**

In 2022, I reported that OHA SA/NT was applying for registration as a charity under the banner of a not-for-profit organisation with the Australian Taxation Office. After further investigation (it is a daunting process), I raised this with OHA (National) and it has been decided to make this innovation a national approach. This way each State can benefit from tax-exempt fundraising in its own manner. Certainly, a lot less work for SA/NT, and there will be one Oral History Fund, not seven.

### **Oral History Handbook**

The current 5th edition of the Handbook had a small reprint to cater to the continuing requests to purchase a copy. Recently, Beth Robertson wrote to me regarding the 6th edition. Beth retired from her years of service at the Library in October and will have the time to focus on the new handbook. Committee member, Sally Stephenson, will be working with Beth on the new publication.

I previously reported that there have been some calls for the Handbook to be made available in a digital format. Sounds easy. But in reality, there are some significant issues around copyright protection, sales/income protection, and its online management. At this time, I have ruled out producing a digital copy.

Since Beth wrote to me, I have raised the possibility of having an official launch in conjunction with the Victorian Committee organising the 2024 conference in November.

### **OHA SA/NT Events**

The Christmas 'brunches' that were started a few years ago continue to be popular and last December's event at Carrick Hill arranged by Karen and Dianne was excellent and relaxing.



At the end of July, the committee held a detailed brainstorming and planning session at the Magill Campus of UniSA. It was a positive (almost) five hours and there are great thoughts and ideas in planning.

Earlier, I mentioned the History Council of SA's Historian of the Year Awards. A number of our members attended this event and many other activities during the History Festival. The Excellence in Oral History Award continues to be a significant success.

### **Oral History Training**

Our thanks must go to the State Library of SA for its continuing support of OHA SA/NT; it is appreciated and valued. Training has to evolve, and we have attempted to do things a little differently. The workshops at the SLSA have been well attended. A national approach to training has been discussed and 'Train the Trainer' guides and workshops are being planned.

Taking our organisation and training into the community has been successful, albeit with some learning curves. The 'teaching team' concept has worked satisfactorily in its first year. Unfortunately, I was still ill when the Port Adelaide/Enfield grant training scheme was conducted. Thankfully Christeen, Carolyn, and Karen made the initial workshop, and follow-up review and networking a positive experience for everyone. Last Sunday, we conducted a well-presented and interesting workshop at the Gawler Library. I managed to get to this event with the bulk of the organising done by Carolyn and Christeen.

### **Networking**

Continued membership of the History Council of South Australia (HCSA) is proving to be beneficial. This networking is important for OHA SA/NT. There will be a new President after its AGM in October.

Even with my limited capacity for the first six months, I have met with a few members over a coffee. This year, Christeen Schoepf included a welcoming renewal letter not only to current members, but recently-former members. She will report on membership later.

### **Oral History Projects**

The more notable project for SA/NT will be the 2026 National Conference. We have discussed that in broad terms at our recent 'planning day' and it will be a fixture on the committee meeting agenda.

Our reach into the community, universities, and other history organisations is growing and from that further projects and archival oral histories will be created.

### **Oral History Australia**

In closing, I am indebted to our busy committee members for their support in making our Association active, functioning, and stepping in for me while I was recuperating.

At the 2022 AGM, I made a challenge to all of our members. I asked for commitment of 0.5% of your time over six months. There have been two who have. Can this grow in the next 12 months?

Thank you.

**David Sweet**  
**State President**  
**OHA SA/NT**





# Catching up with our members

Christeen Schoepf

## Bernie O'Neil

At the Cornish Association of South Australia's biennial seminar, held in Kadina during the 2023 [Kernewek Lowender](#), I caught up with long-time member of OHA SA/NT, Bernie O'Neil. The seminar titled 'The Cornish in Public Life' featured papers given by historians that are experts in their field of the Cornish diaspora in Australia. We heard about the lives of Governors with Cornish connections, businessmen, lawyers, miners and mine captains, musicians, and even the occasional woman!

Bernie co-presented his paper with Sue Randell, the daughter of Keith Johns. Their paper was titled 'Contributing to the growth of South Australia: Keith Johns and his Cornish mining links'. Born in Port Pirie, Keith was a government geologist for his whole career, joined the Geological Survey of SA in 1948 and rose to be appointed Director-General of the SA Department of Mines and Energy in 1983. He played a very significant role in the opening and expansion of Olympic Dam Mine and his passion for mining and mining heritage continued after his retirement in 1992. Keith unfortunately died the week before the seminar.



*Bernie pictured following the presentation of his paper at the CASA Seminar  
Photo supplied by Christeen Schoepf*

## Sophia Katari

Sophia Katari is a relatively new member of OHA SA/NT and is the manager of the Junction Community Centre at 2A May Terrace, Ottoway (corner of Grand Junction Road). Carolyn Collins and I visited Sophia at the centre recently to congratulate her and the team for their fabulous oral history-based exhibition 'Wondering About Freedom', held during the May 2023 History Festival. The exhibition is now housed at the Junction Community Centre where it is hoped it will be added to by others willing to tell of their migrant/refugee experience. We were taken on a tour of the complex, and experienced first-hand the extent of Sophia's busy workday. No wonder she was awarded the City of Port Adelaide Enfield's Citizen of the Year for 2023! She has a passion for cultural inclusivity and has worked tirelessly for about twenty years in community centres with a diversity of cultures, including migrants and refugees from many countries. Her award noted:

*Sophia has been an outstanding contributor to the community and works to promote a greater understanding between diverse communities and minority groups. She creates opportunities for people to meet and share their stories and to dispel myths and stereotypes.*

Welcome to OHA SA/NT Sophia, it was a privilege to visit the centre and hear of the journeys of your members. We look forward to many more.



*Christeen Schoepf (left) with Sophia Katari (right) at the Junction Community Centre  
Photo supplied by Christeen Schoepf*





# From a mud map to an oral history project

Madeleine Regan

When I first met Johnny Marchioro in 2007, I had no idea that we would collaborate on an oral history project about Italian market gardeners for sixteen years. When I recorded my first oral history interview with Johnny, he reflected on his long working life as a market gardener and said, "I don't find any regrets in working the land." He began helping as a child, worked full-time with his parents after leaving school, and ran a market garden at Bolivar in partnership with his wife, Eleonora, from 1965 to 2007. Although retired from cultivating vegetables for market, they have continued to grow produce for family and friends, and each winter, many Italians in South Australia wait eagerly for the Marchioro's artichokes.

## An interest in Italian migrants and market gardens

I was interested in Italian migrants in Adelaide and their contribution to the market garden industry. In 2006, I asked my friend, Aida, if her father, from the Veneto region, would be interested in recording his memories because he had owned a small factory in the western suburbs that made pine boxes, or 'half cases.' Market gardeners used these to pack vegetables for market. Mr Innocente made and delivered the boxes to market gardeners in different areas of Adelaide. In addition to interviewing her Dad, Aida suggested that I meet Johnny and Eleonora because they had worked a market garden at Bolivar for many years.



*Eleonora and Johnny Marchioro, tying up tomatoes,  
Bolivar, 1975*

*Photo supplied by Johnny Marchioro*

During our first meeting, Johnny drew a mud map that represented part of the history of the Veneto market gardeners in the suburb we know today as Kidman Park. He told me about growing up on the market gardens on Frogmore Road in the 1940s. On the map, Johnny identified Italian and Anglo Australian families who worked on market gardens close to the River Torrens within three kilometres of each other.

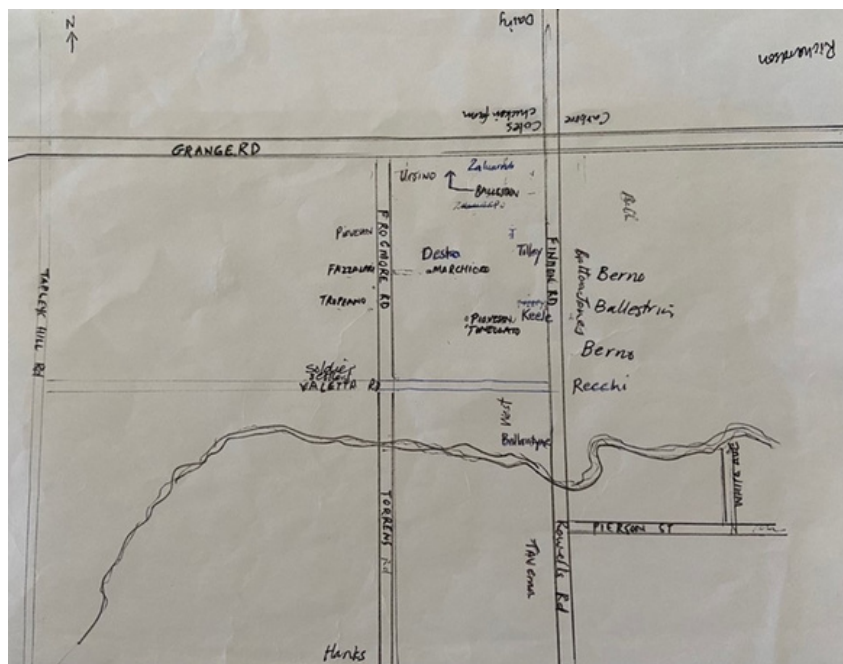
Through Johnny, I learned about a place and community in the western suburbs that was new to me because by 2007, the area had long been a densely populated inner suburb without evidence of the previous agricultural activity. Johnny described the first-generation community of Veneto market gardeners who had made a living on the land. I learned that Johnny's parents were part of



a group of market gardeners who had arrived in Adelaide from the Veneto region in the north-east of Italy. The group established their gardens in the 1930s on land they leased, and later bought, in Flinders Park and Kidman Park.

In his oral history interview, Johnny described his parents' work in the early days, the vegetables that they grew, the impact of the seasons, and his jobs as a child including milking the family cow at seven years old. He also spoke about his life-long commitment to working the land and his satisfaction as a market gardener. Johnny introduced

me to his friends, sons and daughters of those original market gardeners, and with support from June Edwards, the Archivist at the State Library (and a past President of OHA SA/NT), I began interviewing and learning more about the community of Veneto market gardeners.



*Johnny Marchioro's mud map, drawn in 2007  
Names of market gardeners including Anglo Australian families are identified  
in the map, as well as locations of farms, roads, and the River Torrens  
Photo supplied by Madeleine Regan*

## Johnny's donations to the State Library

Since 2007, I've become a close friend of Johnny and Eleonora and they have been involved with the project. Johnny and I co-presented talks to local history groups with two Veneto friends, and together with Eleonora, we presented a paper at the 2011 Oral History Australia conference in Melbourne. Earlier this year, Johnny asked whether there might be interest in the records books that he had kept since the late 1950s. When he left school, Johnny worked with his parents who had 21 glasshouses at Lockleys growing tomatoes, beans, and other vegetables. In 1958, at the age of 18, Johnny began keeping detailed records of what his family sold every time they went to market. The records document the operations of a small, migrant family business.

After Johnny married Eleonora Ottanelli in 1965, the couple moved to Bolivar and worked hard to establish their own market garden of seven acres. Johnny continued to keep meticulous records. He documented details of cultivation and sales from the first crop of tomatoes grown in 1966—sowing seed, planting seedlings, growing seasons, period of picking, market prices, and sales. A second component included the costs of setting up the market garden, purchase of equipment, and materials such as fertiliser and seeds. Johnny also recorded all costs related to building their house at Bolivar.



Johnny's three records books, donated to the State Library  
Photo supplied by Madeleine Regan

1960 Started to Pick June 6						Started to Pick June 18 Bishop					
TOMATOES	F	S	T	Total	DATE	TOMATOES	F	S	Total	DATE	
£2-10-0	3	3	1	8	22-6-60	£2-0-0	2	1	4	18-6-59	
£2-10-0	3	2	1	8	28-6-60	£2-0-0	4	3	13	25-6-59	
£2-10-0	9	5	4	22	6-7-60	£1-6-0	5	3	13	2-7-59	
£2-10-0	16	9	4	37	13-7-60	£1-8-0	9	4	22	9-7-59	
£2-10-0	16	9	4	37	20-7-60	£1-16-0	14	6	32	16-7-59	
£2-4-0	26	15	7	55	27-7-60	£1-10-0	18	10	67	23-7-59	
£1-16-0	35	28	12	84	3-8-60	£1-10-0	28	14	94	30-7-59	
£1-16-0	34	27	12	86	10-8-60	£1-8-0	26	20	109	6-8-59	
£1-16-0	39	25	12	81	17-8-60	£1-10-0	21	16	100	13-8-59	
£1-16-0	13	13	7	37	24-8-60	£2-0-0	25	14	98	20-8-59	
£2-10-0	6	13	12	37	31-8-60	£2-16-0	18	19	87	26-8-59	
£2-14-0	8	17	14	47	7-9-60	£2-6-0	17	13	66	2-9-59	
£2-10-0	7	12	7	32	14-9-60	£2-16-0	7	7	28	9-9-59	
£2-6-0	2	4	3	12	21-9-60	£2-8-0	2	8	9	16-9-59	
Total 582 cases						Total 743 cases					
						1960					
						TOMATOES OUTSIDE APPROX £320-0-0 1959-60					
						BEANS 20 dozen £85-0-0 1960					
						TROMBONE 3 doz 15 each £54-15-0 1959-60					
						LETTUCE 889 dozen £354-9 1960					
						BEETROOT					
						ONIONS 314 dozen £110-17-0 1960					
						TURNIPS 147 dozen £58-16-0 1960					
						BRANS					
						TOMATOES 582 cases £963-0-0 1960					
						Tomatoes					

An image of Johnny's entries in the first records book  
Note: these entries pre-date decimal currency  
Photo supplied by Madeleine Regan



Together, Johnny's three books of records provide a detailed picture of two generations of an Italian-migrant family business on the land in Adelaide from 1958 to 1994.

Recently, Johnny donated his records books to the State Library of South Australia archives. These historical documents reflect the scale of changes in growing vegetables, market prices, operational costs, and earnings involved in small, intensive family market gardens that do not exist today. Circumstances changed for small, family-owned market gardens in the 1990s with the increase of large-scale businesses cultivating vegetables for supermarket trade.

## **A family collection of oral histories and artefacts**

The State Library now holds a comprehensive collection of oral history interviews and other artefacts that provide detailed information about two generations of the Marchioro family and their experience of market gardening in Adelaide. Johnny's parents, Vittorio and Angelina, were interviewed in 1984 for a project about migrants who arrived between the wars. In his interview, Johnny speaks about his long career of working market gardens and the Veneto community. His brother, Romano, reflects on his childhood, the market garden and links to other Veneto families. Eleonora describes her experience of becoming a market gardener in partnership with Johnny.

The following interviews are in the State Library:

- Vittorio and Angelina Marchioro OH 12 (1984)
- Johnny Marchioro OH 872/1 (2008)
- Romano Marchioro OH 872/20 (2012)
- Eleonora Marchioro OH 896/7 (2008).

Johnny also donated photos which reflect his family's life and the community of the market gardens from the 1940s to the 1990s.

## **An oral history cultivated over 16 years**

By chance, Johnny's mud map has led to an ongoing oral history project. There are now sixty-five oral history interviews in the JD Somerville collection in the State Library, and a website: [www.venetimarketgardeners1927.net/](http://www.venetimarketgardeners1927.net/)

It hosts recordings of interviews, transcripts, and family photos. A fortnightly blog celebrates the families, festivals, and seasons related to the Veneto families and culture with contributors from Australia, Italy, and Canada. The project has also resulted in a PhD, and a book that I hope will be published next year.

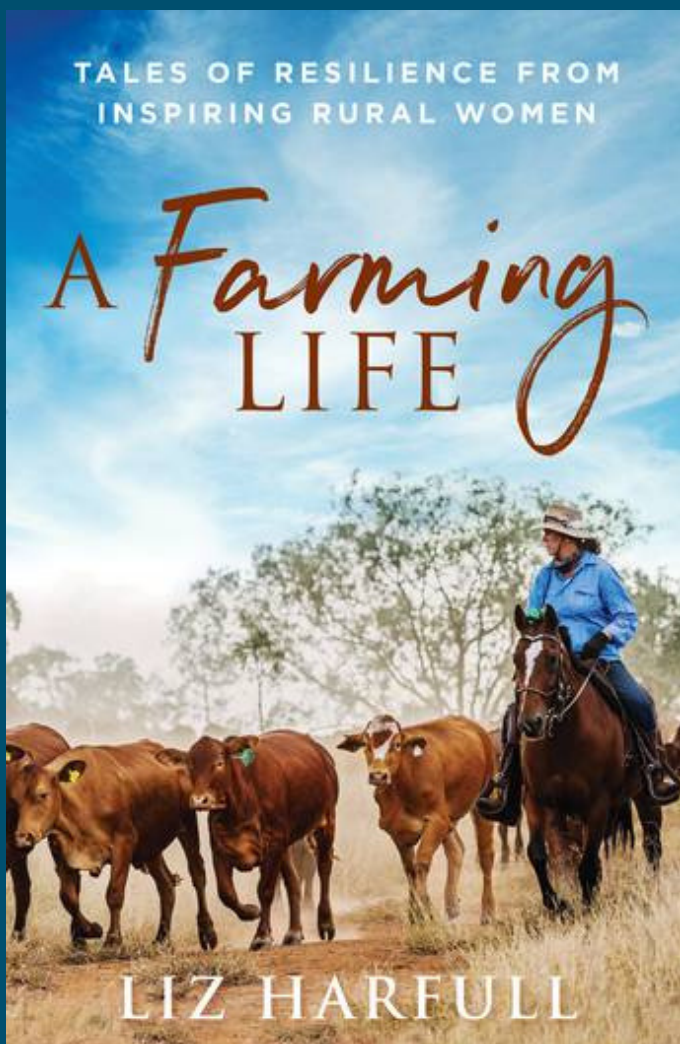
Meeting Johnny in 2007 opened a door into history. The processes of gathering the oral histories and establishing the website bring life to the stories of the Veneto market gardener community in Adelaide's western suburbs from the 1930s.



# A Farming Life: Tales of resilience from inspiring rural women

## By Liz Harfull

Allen & Unwin, 320pp, RRP \$34.99, PB



Bestselling author and OHA SA/NT member, Liz Harfull, shares fascinating true stories of rural Australian women, showcasing the passion, tenacity and resilience required to make a life on the land.

*A Farming Life* shares the uplifting stories of women from six rural families as their resilience is tested by personal loss, illness, fractured relationships, natural disasters and the challenges that come with working in a traditionally male-dominated world.

These women are all hands-on farmers—in fact, most are responsible for managing their own farms—and their defiance, tenacity and genuine humility shines through, as does their hope for the next generation of young women already lining up to follow in their footsteps.

Congratulations Liz!

# ***Don't Overdue It:* Telling Tales with a library podcast**

Created and produced by Ricky Koopman and Danni Reade  
from the City of Mount Gambier Library

Back in 2021, ongoing COVID lockdowns and Library closures forced us to reassess the way we would connect with our community during—and later in a post-COVID—world. How do we maintain relationships when our patrons can't physically visit us? How do we entice the community to come back and re-engage with our programs when the doors reopen? And is there an opportunity to create potential new relationships with those beyond the reach of our services?

Enter Adult Programming Officer Ricky Koopman, with the idea of creating a library podcast.

"We can talk about all the great programs we offer," he said.

"We can interview the authors that visit us," he said.

"We can tell all our favourite local history stories," he said.

We know, like most of you, that not everyone gets excited by dusty old books, and photographs of grumpy-looking old men in top hats and beards—no matter how majestic those top hats and beards might be. Maybe, we thought, a podcast could provide a modern, accessible, shiny carrot to dangle in front of our community and lure them into a love of history.

At our fingertips are the thousands of items held within our local and family history collection here at Mount Gambier Library. Many of these items were collected by newsagent-turned-historian-and-author, the late Les Hill. Les wrote many books during his lifetime, however, the most popular and comprehensive of his works was published back in 1972 and has never had an update from Les in his lifetime, or anyone else since. The *Don't Overdue It* podcast helps to extend Les's work, filling in this 50-year gap, providing new and updated research, new context, new opinion, and new understanding of our most treasured local history stories. And on a broader scale, this podcast provides greater efficiency of access to the collection and creates a new flexible resource that's being used in schools and aged-care facilities, by community groups, locals, and tourists alike. Our knowledge of our community, our history, our stories, and our people makes this podcast what it is. And really, those connections are what libraries do best. Many of our episodes are driven and inspired by the everyday conversations we have with our library patrons and, incredibly, the request to record their stories is always met with great enthusiasm.

The February 2023 episode of *Don't Overdue It*, titled 'The Day The Sky Caught Fire: 40th Anniversary of Ash Wednesday', is a key example of history being revisited and enhanced by modern interviews, and the willingness of our community to share their memories. Mount Gambier Library holds several published works written in the immediate aftermath of the Ash





Wednesday fires, but most of these works underreport the magnitude of the fire, and only record the event from an adult perspective. Revisiting the disaster for the podcast enabled us to fill in the historical gaps and record, for the first time, the memories of those who were children and teenagers in 1983. Such was the collective, unifying impact of the disaster that we simply walked a lap around the library and stopped staff, volunteers, and patrons (anyone, really, who looked over the age of 40) and asked, “where were you on Ash Wednesday?” Their responses flowed freely, with remarkable stories providing both a chilling recount of the events, and an insight into long-lasting personal impacts of the disaster.

*Don't Overdue It* is not just a history podcast, however. It's a promotional tool for the entire library: our programs, events, and core services all get a guernsey. But what it doesn't do, surprisingly, is take a huge amount of time to create an episode. The project brief was clear that we were simply value-adding to the work we are already doing.

Do we have a special guest presenter coming in for an event? Great! Let's interview them!

Uncovered a fascinating local history story? Fabulous! Let's discuss it!

A community initiative that's bringing crowds of people through the doors? Brilliant! Let's get out there with a microphone!

Three seasons, 31 episodes, and the 2023 History Council of South Australia Excellence in Oral History Award later, *Don't Overdue It* has blossomed into an evolving celebration of our community that we are really proud of. Our statistics show that we are capturing and growing a strong Australia-wide and international audience with each new release. At the end of 2022, our humble offerings from our beautiful facility here in regional South Australia sat amongst the top 15 percent of the most shared podcasts globally.

We really hope our success can entice others to explore the podcasting format and to bring alive their treasured old stories, while creating fascinating new ones.

*Don't Overdue It* by the City of Mount Gambier Library can be found for free on all the most popular podcast platforms, with a new episode being released each month.



*Danni Reade and Ricky Koopman at one of Mount Gambier's oldest but lesser known cemeteries*  
Photo supplied by City of Mount Gambier

# Upcoming Oral History Conferences

## 2024 OHA Biennial Conference

### The Power of Oral History—Risks, Rewards & Responsibilities

21-24 November, 2024

Trinity College, Parkville, Melbourne

<https://oralhistoryaustralia.org.au/biennial-conference-2024/>

Call for Presentations deadline: 1 April 2024

Our conference theme 'The Power of Oral History—Risks, Rewards & Responsibilities' taps into the many powerful features of oral history practice including the potential to evoke powerful emotions, bring forth new voices and engage new audiences through multimedia.

Our keynote speakers include the legendary **Alessandro Portelli**. Over more than 50 years, Alessandro has been one of the most influential oral historians in the world. His keynote title is to be confirmed but we can't wait to hear what he has to say.

## 2024 NOHANZ Conference

15-17 November, 2024

Parnell Hotel & Conference Centre, Parnell, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland

<https://www.oralhistory.org.nz/index.php/event/15-17-november-2024-nohanz-conference/>

# Call for Papers

## *Studies in Oral History*, Issue no. 46 (2024)

### Working Lives & Workplaces

Co-editors: Skye Krichauff & Carla Pascoe Leahy

<https://oralhistoryaustralia.org.au/cfp-journal-issue46/>

Submissions deadline: 1 December 2023

This special issue of the OHA journal will explore oral histories of working lives, workplaces and work, all broadly defined to incorporate histories of volunteering, military service and other types of service. Papers that employ or interrogate oral history methodologies and illuminate aspects of working life, workplaces, and workplace culture are invited.

The 2023 issue of *Studies in Oral History* follows the theme of the OHA's 2022 Conference, 'Oral history in Troubling Times: Opportunities and Challenges'. Co-editors, Carla and Skye, advise that production of the journal is proceeding smoothly and anticipate a publication date in early November, 2023.



# “Let us never suffer again the tragedy of 1956”: Memories from Renmark residents of the 1956 Flood

Judy Bailey

OHA SA/NT Committee Member and  
Project Officer at Renmark Irrigation Trust

Renmark Irrigation Trust has been actively documenting the lives of Renmark residents via oral history recordings and collecting artefacts which have a strong connection to the operation of the Trust. In the previous issue of Word of Mouth (no. 82, Autumn 2023), I outlined the impact of the 2022 Flood on Renmark. This flood, which was second only to the 1956 flood, brought the experience of the 1956 flood to the fore. Many ‘old timers’ who had lived through that flood wished to share their experiences.

We decided to capitalise on the mood of the time and chose a theme which highlighted the reconstruction of Renmark after the flood had receded. We had a group of residents who wished to contribute, so we organised a panel event. It was hosted by the Renmark Paringa Library on May 3, as part of the SA History Festival. The library created event posters and coordinated bookings. Trust staff sourced information from the Trust archives, photographs, oral histories, and newspaper articles to compile a background display which supported the panel event.

We had a wonderful panel of locals—Max Burr, Clack John, and Ian Tolley—who shared their different perspectives. Max spoke about the sudden collapse of the High School bank at the peak of the 1956 flood, Clack described how the hospital functioned during and after the flood, and Ian covered a wide array of topics on the flood and its aftermath.

Comparisons between the recent 2022 Flood and the 1956 Flood were also covered. Almost 80 people attended this informative and inspiring talk. It was wonderful to see how many of the older residents came along and connected with old friends over a cup of tea and wonderful cakes supplied by the library staff.

The numbers of people interested in coming to the event far outweighed the room size, so we engaged a local company to film and photograph the event. Photos and other information can be found on the RIT website: <https://rit.org.au/history-events/>

The talk was also recorded and can be found here:  
<https://youtu.be/mLl48Ji7ip0>

*The panel event, 3 May 2023  
Photo supplied*





*Our wonderful panel, from left to right: Max Burr, Clack John, and Ian Tolley, with MC James John from RIT  
Photo supplied*



*The attentive audience in the Renmark Paringa Library  
Photo supplied*

# Christeen Schoepf

## Port Adelaide Library

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a brown sweater and a lanyard, holding a small black device.



Photos supplied by Carolyn Collins

## Media Room, Parks Library

The Parks Council Library at 46 Trafford St, Angle Park, houses a dedicated recording room that has been acoustically treated for quality results. The Media Room is equipped with everything you need to begin creating audio and video content. Below is a complete list of all the equipment available:

Computer: 2017 iMac

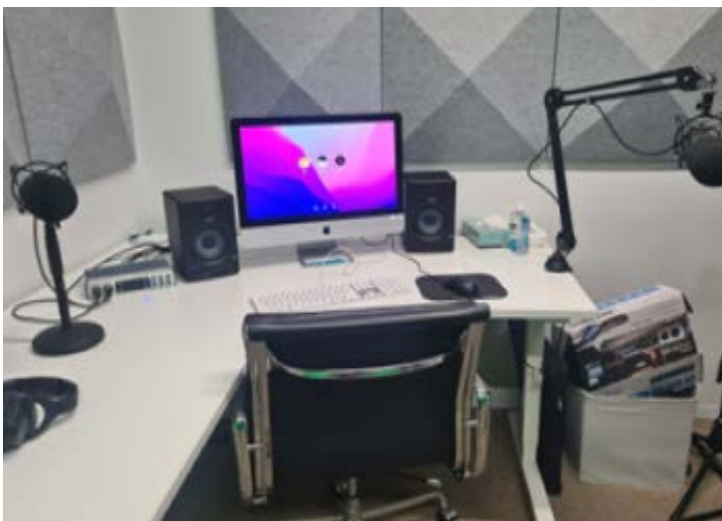
Audio Hardware:

- 2x Rode Procaster Microphones with pop filters
- Desk mic stand
- Rode PSA1 Studio Boom Arm
- 2x Sennheiser HD 280 Headphones
- PreSonus Eris E4.5 reference monitors
- PreSonus Studio 6/8 USB Audio Interface
- Novation Launch Key 61 MIDI Keyboard
- Korg Volca Sample
- Korg Nano Kontrol 2

Software:

- Apple Logic Pro 10.6.3 (audio workstation)
- Davinci Resolve (video editor)
- Audacity (audio workstation)
- iMovie (video editor)
- Filmora (video editor)
- Garageband (audio workstation)

Contact the Parks Library on 8405 6550 to discuss booking the room for your project. Please note, there are set times this room can be used effectively due to background noise from the other activities within the Makers Space.



*The Media Room at the Parks Library Complex,  
adjacent to the Makers Space Room  
Photo supplied by Christeen Schoepf*



# Port Adelaide Enfield Introductory Workshop, 2023

## Christeen Schoepf

During 2022, OHA SA/NT received a grant to provide residents of Port Adelaide Enfield Council the opportunity to attend Oral History Workshops. Christeen, Carolyn, and Karen provided a workshop at the Port Adelaide Library complex in November, 2022 and members of the Junction Community Centre formed the greatest collective number of attendees. Others were independent researchers with projects that spanned from memories of Fort Largs to personal family histories.

Several of the attendees from the Junction Community Centre did not have a good command of English but battled through and asked some very poignant questions throughout the day, so they had in fact learned a great deal from the sessions! After learning about open-ended questions, ethics, planning a project, and the alternatives for how the finished product might look, the group broke into two sections and brainstormed a project plan, some interview questions, and then practiced with each other. This was an interesting exercise since most of those who attended were from diverse cultural backgrounds. We have as yet to hear back from those who were not part of the Junction Community Centre cohort but hope they will soon let us know where they are in their projects so we can get them to write a report for our next edition. The results of the interviews conducted by the community centre are discussed below. Their project was poignant, emotive, informative, and just fabulous. We were blown away with the presentation, the quality, and professionalism. Congratulations to everyone involved.

## *Wondering About Freedom*

The Junction Community Centre aims to create a welcoming, responsive, inclusive, and supportive environment working with the community to help it meet the needs of individuals, families, and community groups in the local area. The attendees from the Junction Community Centre who attended the PAE Introduction to Oral History Workshop, intended to record the stories and memories of migrants who attend the community centre. They sought to discover their reasons for coming to Australia and the diverse journeys each would take. The project was completed in the early months of 2023 and was presented as part of the History Festival in May. The interviews told the poignant stories of loss and triumph as the migrants took the listener through their journeys from one place to another. The Exhibition page, including recordings of the interviews, can be found here: [Wondering about Freedom | Council of Port Adelaide Enfield \(cityofpae.sa.gov.au\)](https://www.cityofpae.sa.gov.au/Wondering_about_Freedom_|_Council_of_Port_Adelaide_Enfield)



*Christeen at the 'Wondering About Freedom' Exhibition  
Photo supplied by Carolyn Collins*

# Oral history team heads to Gawler

Carolyn Collins

Three members of the Oral History SA/NT committee—Christeen Schoepf, David Sweet, and Carolyn Collins—travelled to Gawler on August 13 to present a new half-day introductory workshop.

Eight participants, including four new members, enjoyed an afternoon of conversation and hands-on exercises designed to help them plan their own projects, and gain skills and confidence in interviewing.

The variety of projects being undertaken by those attending is testimony to the expanding interest and application of oral history today, with interview subjects ranging from politicians and professional women to community volunteers and war brides. We look forward to hearing more about these projects as they progress.

The committee is grateful for the assistance of the Town of Gawler and its Cultural Heritage Centre Co-ordinator, Jacinta Weiss, for supporting and assisting our workshop, and to our fellow member, Denise Schumann, for her help in coordinating it.

OHA SA/NT is keen to hold workshops in areas outside of Adelaide, so if you have a group who would be interested in attending one in your area, please get in touch.

And remember, our commitment to helping workshop participants does not end on the day. We are happy to offer help with project planning, advice on equipment, or just moral support to anyone undertaking oral history work in South Australia and the Northern Territory. Just drop us a line on our email or through the OHA SA/NT website and one of our committee members will be in contact.



# Membership Report

## Oral History Australia SA/NT 2023

Christeen Schoepf

Last year I reported the downward trend in membership numbers, and it will not surprise you all to hear that this has continued into the current year. While COVID and its aftermath had been seen to be the reason during the past few years, the status of the economy has presented ever increasing struggles for families. This has ultimately influenced their decision to join or remain members of associations such as ours. Recent meetings of the National Committee have also broached the declining membership numbers and retention struggles, and each state has been attempting new strategies to maintain membership at current levels or to make membership more appealing. Some of these have included:

- Networking events
- Enhanced and more regular social media presence
- Annual seminars
- Workshops
- Social gatherings
- Monthly online skills and exchange sessions

The committee are currently taking onboard the above noted actions and we welcome any further suggestions from our members. To this end, I am again asking that you all complete those portions of the Membership Form that is sent out each year, so that we as a committee are aware of what you are hoping to learn and experience from your membership and can respond accordingly.

On a brighter note, I would like to welcome staff of the Mount Gambier Library—most significantly, Danni Reade and Ricky Kooper as winners of the Excellence in Oral History Award—to our membership. A brief overview of the reason for their award is as follows:

**The *Don't Overdue It* podcast created and produced by Mount Gambier Library staff and members Ricky Koopman and Danni Reade showcases library programs and events as well as enhancing stories from Mount Gambier's past; creating a modern, engaging, and accessible gateway to the physical items in the collection. The interviews are both fascinating and thought provoking.**

An article about the podcast written by Danni can be found earlier in this edition of *Word of Mouth*.





*Danni Reade and Ricky Koopman of Mount Gambier Library with President of the HCSA, Gillian Dooley, at the presentation of the HCSA Awards where they won the Excellence in Oral History Award  
Photo supplied by Christeen Schoepf*

In closing, please seriously consider any ways you believe we can assist you with your journey recording the oral histories of others, be they part of a larger project, for your thesis, or to capture the memories of those who are part of your family, your workplace, your place of leisure, or an event of interest.

Our trip to the Launceston Conference revealed to our sibling groups and those attending from other nations that we are a strong, cohesive, and collegial group who support each other professionally, like family, with a friendship and concern that knows no bounds. I look forward to as many of us as we can gather attending the Melbourne OHA Conference in November next year to receive the baton (also known as the box of name tags) that will set the wheels in motion for us to produce the best conference ever in Adelaide, 2026. I am hopeful that you will all come along for the ride!

Thank you.



# Book Review

## *In the Eye of the Storm: Volunteers and Australia's Response to the HIV/AIDS Crisis*

Robert Reynolds, Shirleene Robinson, Paul Sendziuk

UNSW Press, 272pp, RRP \$39.99, PB

Dante DeBono

Earlier this year, [researchers announced that a 53-year-old man in Germany was reportedly cured of HIV](#) following a high-risk stem cell transplant. Having stopped his HIV medication four years prior after undergoing the procedure, 'the Dusseldorf patient' still has no detectable virus in his body. While still very much in its experimental phase, this news sparks hope for the future that perhaps hasn't been felt since HIV became effectively treatable through antiretroviral therapy.

It's a far cry from that dark moment in living memory that saw HIV/AIDS decimate a global community. It might surprise some to know that Australia's response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic was considered one of the best in the world, but it certainly wasn't seamless. The first AIDS diagnosis in Australia was in November of 1982, and what followed was a period of hysteria, discrimination, fear, grief, and death. And yet, throughout this tumultuous time, there were individuals and organisations dedicated to the care of those affected by HIV/AIDS. It is these volunteers who are at the centre of *In the Eye of the Storm*.

Robert Reynolds, Shirleene Robinson, and Paul Sendziuk have curated twelve oral histories from a major project that included more than 60 interviews. Each story helps paint an intimate picture of this crisis, outlining the unique challenges faced by these volunteers on the frontlines, taking up different roles, joining the cause for different reasons, and yet all examples of the compassion and perseverance it takes to answer the call to help others without reward.

To be expected, majority of the interviews are with gay men. As a demographic, not only did they face the immediate dangers of a deadly epidemic moving swiftly through their community, but also the targeted bigotry more commonplace at the time. Anti-discrimination laws were passed in 1982, but they did not prevent the inflammatory media reports relating HIV/AIDS exclusively with gay men, stoking fear, prejudice, and violence. This backlash made the work of people like Adam Carr—a Melbourne-based gay journalist dedicated to dispelling misinformation at the time—a vital part of Australia's response to HIV/AIDS. Indeed, the importance of community education is mentioned throughout *In the Eye of the Storm*. Initiatives like pamphlets and public presentations about HIV/AIDS and safe sex practices, informal discussions at known beats conducted through outreach programs, and the AIDSline telephone information hotline were considered essential services that required the ongoing work of unpaid volunteers. It's impossible to say how many lives they saved.

The book is divided by chapters, each one dedicated to a single volunteer, allowing for the space to explore their broader life stories that surround the common thread of the book. You can trace some similarities between them: altruistic dispositions, personable temperaments, the strength to endure. And yet, what is most compelling is the variety of their experiences.





There's the story of William (Bill) Rutkin OAM, president of the Queensland AIDS Council from 1985 to 1992, whose professional expertise played a significant role in establishing organisational infrastructure whilst facing down a hostile, conservative state government pushing a homophobic agenda. To this day, Bill continues to work with social justice organisations in the ongoing fight for equality on a global scale.

Compare this legacy to Jim, who cared for his partner following both their positive diagnoses in 1990, forced to advocate for him in medical settings when staff were negligent, and yet came out of that time transformed for the better. Following the death of his partner, Jim insists, "I was bursting with energy. I wanted to go out there and help people," (p. 198). But as a long-term survivor, that difficult period of his life has resulted in a precarious living situation with limited resources and a sense of being left behind.

While there are the more predictable appearances of gay men feeling a responsibility to their own community, there's also unexpected stories from people like Trevor. He was a straight man from country Victoria who describes caring for his gay brother, David, holding his hand as he passed just six days short of his 40th birthday. Trevor stayed on as a carer and support worker for others, and established a fund in David's memory that still provides support to those impacted by HIV/AIDS. But he also admits to being haunted by the memories of his little brother who suffered a "terrible death" (p. 104).

As a young queer person reading this book, moments like this stay with you. There are poignant reminders scattered throughout *In the Eye of the Storm* that highlight the importance of remembering—of remembering this deadly part of our history, of grieving the lives that were lost prematurely, of recognising the people who are still affected by it, who describe that time as war-like. Without works like this book, we run the risk of trivialising the feat of those who made it through the initial years of the HIV/AIDS crisis. But that is not to say a more general readership would not sympathise with the hardships described. Indeed, it could be those with a very limited awareness of the HIV/AIDS epidemic who might get the most out of this book.

As researchers and writers, Reynolds, Robinson, and Sendziuk have done a wonderful job connecting these stories, weaving together a comprehensive history of the HIV/AIDS response within an Australian context. Readers might be surprised at how interested they are in the multitude of footnotes they have so diligently provided, clarifying sources of information and linking to related texts for further reading. And yet, the book never loses sight of the sheer humanness of this narrative. The volunteers recount their deeply personal experiences with such honesty. They don't shy away from the grim realities of being surrounded by the dying, or the isolation they felt as their grassroots organisations became increasingly corporate with the distancing of time. We are privy to their sadness, their trauma, their anger, their hope.

Cipri Martinez, who began volunteering shortly after his positive diagnosis in the early 1990s, still works with The National Association of People with HIV Australia (NAPWAH). His ongoing drive and activism for his community is something to be inspired by. He reminds us that while those horror days when mortality rates were at their worst and little was known about this new virus might be behind us, we are not yet free of HIV/AIDS.

*"How could I have the privilege of living in a Western country and having access to medication to keep me alive; how could I then not be part of driving for access to medication internationally? That had to happen. We're still all part of the human family. I see everyone as part of my human family. It's a massive driver for me."*

(pp. 244-245)

In the face of a turbulent political climate, and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, it pays to be reminded of the value and significance of simply caring for each other.





# 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

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