

President's Report – 2016-17 Financial Year

It's been a busy year for the Oral History NSW Executive Committee. We have focused on offering a wider range of seminars and workshops to cater for our diverse group of members, on expanding our reach, and on laying the groundwork for some new and exciting initiatives which we will introduce in the 2017-2018 financial year. 38 new members joined Oral History NSW in the 2016-2017 financial year.

In November 2016 and April 2017, Vice President Scott McKinnon and I ran two short seminars titled 'An Introduction to Oral History', in partnership with the Royal Australian Historical Society. These seminars served as a precursor to our popular Capturing Memories workshops. Both events were very well-attended, by people who were new to oral history and were eager to pursue it. It was great to see Oral History NSW reaching a wider audience.

Our biannual Capturing Memories workshops remain an important, practical, and popular offering. This year, these workshops were expertly run by Janis Wilton and Andrew Host in October 2016, and by Pauline Curby and Andrew Host in March 2017.

In December 2016, we ran a seminar titled *Painful Memories: Interviewing Survivors of Trauma* with the State Library of NSW. In this session, Associate Professor Robert Reynolds from Macquarie University, Alison Wishart from the State Library of NSW, and social geographer Dr Christine Eriksen from University of Wollongong shared how they have navigated the difficult terrain of interviewing survivors of trauma. If you missed the seminar, you can access the audio recordings here: <http://www.oralhistorynsw.org.au/oral-history-papers--audio-recordings.html> We also held a Christmas Party at History House in December. It was a lovely evening, and will now become an annual fixture in Oral History NSW's events calendar.

This year, we continued to run oral history training for other organisations. In March, professional historian Kate Waters delivered a workshop on interviewing indigenous Australians to indigenous staff members at the Office of the Environment and Heritage in Broke, NSW. In April, past President Virginia Macleod ran an introductory seminar on using oral history to discover local history for Woollahra Library in Double Bay.

In June, we invited internationally renowned oral historian Professor Alistair Thomson (Monash University, and President of Oral History Victoria) to run an advanced workshop on interpreting memories. This event, held in partnership with the State Library of NSW, booked out almost instantaneously and was hugely successful. Attendees described the day as "100% engaging" and "fantastic". The enormous enthusiasm for this workshop has highlighted members' interest in advanced-level workshops, and the committee is now working on developing more advanced offerings.



In the new financial year, this July, Oral History NSW ran a seminar on Indigenous Oral Histories at History House. Activist and academic Dino Hodge, and archivist Kirsten Thorpe who leads the Indigenous Services team at the State Library, delivered insightful presentations to a packed house – and session chair Kate Waters also shared some of her learnings from conducting oral history work with indigenous communities. After the seminar, several members expressed an interest in attending further seminars about Indigenous oral histories, so we will be offering another seminar on this topic in 2018. I also hope that this seminar was one step in Oral History NSW continuing to develop a relationship with the Indigenous Services team at the State Library of NSW.

On 9 August, before the AGM, we will be holding a lecture by Dr Tanya Evans (Senior Lecturer, and Director of the Centre for Applied History, at Macquarie University). Tanya will discuss the process of creating her last book, *Swimming with the Spit, 100 years of the Spit Amateur Swimming Club*, and reflect on feminist oral sport history, and the act of ‘sharing authority’ when writing a community history.

The 2017 Biennial Oral History Australia Conference is fast approaching, as we move further into the 2017-2018 year. The conference will be held from 13-16 September 2017 at the Sydney Masonic Centre. The Conference Committee has worked hard to put together what we anticipate will be a rich, varied and inspiring national conference on the theme of *Moving Memories: Oral History in a Global World*. I encourage you to book to attend, if you have not already registered. The conference will be an excellent opportunity to learn about oral history work currently being undertaken across Australia and overseas. It’s a chance to catch up with old friends, build new relationships, and to hear about how oral history is being used in different ways in families, communities, archives, libraries, museums, universities, historical consultancies, and more.

Conference highlights include:

- presentations by Keynote Speakers Dr Indira Chowdhury and Professor Dalia Leinarte;
- a plenary panel on New Directions in Oral History – in which Siobhan McHugh, Sarah Rood, Hamish Sewell, and Alistair Thomson will explore new trends in oral history drawings from their work using oral history in podcasts, sound walks, social change movements, websites, documentaries, and e-books;
- a verbatim community theatre performance titled *Remembering Palestine*, which explores the lives of Palestinian immigrant women who have settled in Brisbane;
- an oral history cello performance by Stephanie Arnold titled *Across the Water*.

For further details, visit the conference website:

<https://dcconferences.eventsair.com/QuickEventWebsitePortal/ohac17/cs>

There are a number of new initiatives on the horizon for Oral History NSW, which we will be rolling out in the 2017-2018 year. These include establishing a book club, revitalising our blog, and running events in western Sydney. I also plan to develop new relationships with other history organisations and further strengthen existing partnerships. As always, I invite members to contact me if you have any ideas that you would like the committee to take on board.



I would like to thank Executive Committee members Bruce Carter, Catherine Freyne, Paula Hamilton, Andrew Host, Scott McKinnon, Cheryl Ware, and Sally Zwartz for all their hard work on the committee this year. As President, it has been a pleasure to lead such an energetic, dedicated and collegial committee. Thanks also to Francis Good, who has continued to do a remarkable job with our monthly newsletter Network News, which keeps members up-to-date about oral history activities across the world. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to my fellow 2017 Conference Committee members – Scott McKinnon, Virginia Macleod, and Paula Hamilton – for the time and energy they have dedicated to ensuring a smooth and successful conference.

Two members of the 2016-2017 Oral History NSW Executive Committee will not be re-nominating at the 2017 AGM. Immediate past President Paula Hamilton stepped down in April 2017, and committee member Catherine Freyne will step down at our upcoming AGM. Paula has made an immeasurable contribution to Oral History NSW in recent years, and Catherine Freyne has efficiently served as Oral History NSW's delegate on the National Committee and as Public Officer for the National Committee. I know I speak for all members when I thank them both for their years of service to Oral History NSW. While Paula and Catherine are formally resigning from their positions on the Executive Committee, I am delighted that they both intend to remain actively involved with our organisation.

Finally, I'd like to thank our members for their continued support and involvement.

Anisa Puri
President, Oral History NSW
August 2017

