



## President's Report 2021

2021 gave us all our second challenging pandemic year for numerous reasons. For the oral history community whose work hinges on personal connections, it affected many of the best-laid plans.

At the start of the year, we officially announced *The Bundanoon History Group (BHG)* as the winner of the 2020 *Oral History NSW Regional Engagement Award*. Their project focuses on conducting oral history interviews with individuals impacted by the 2020 bushfires in the area, and making the information available for academic research, formal presentation, and public interest.

With the Biennial Oral History Conference in Launceston postponed, our grant to support presenters attending the conference will be offered next year. Similarly, the *Oral History NSW Community History Award* was not awarded this year but will be offered again in 2022. If you are planning and working on a community-based project, we do encourage you to start thinking about applying. We look forward to supporting our member's work and projects through our grants and awards in the next year.

We welcomed 17 new members this financial year, and many more still took to social media, particularly through our Facebook and Twitter accounts, to interact and share thoughts, events, articles, resources of interest and more with each other. Though nothing can replace being face to face, adapting to online environments has certainly allowed us to connect with members and expanded audiences outside the geographic reaches of our typical events.

During *Family History Month* I spoke about the community of practice, training and support available from Oral History NSW in two online seminars presented by the State Library of NSW focusing on oral history for family historians. For the second year in a row, I met with architecture and design students and tutors at the University of Sydney to discuss oral history practice, practicalities, and interview considerations - all aimed at informing their design project to create a purpose-built oral history centre in Sydney (wouldn't that be nice?)

With training and workshops, March saw Pauline Curby and our Treasurer Andrew Host present the *Capturing Memories* workshop onsite for State Library of NSW staff, and in April Vice President Scott McKinnon delivered our *Introduction to Oral History* seminar online. By July we were ready and raring to go for our first in-person events in Canberra held over two weekends – though lockdown regrettably thwarted our plans.

Nevertheless, as three of our committee members are based in the nation's capital, we remain committed to holding Canberra events in the future.

A highlight of this year was delivering the first online version of our popular *Capturing Memories* workshop. Very special thanks to our two presenters and committee members Andrew Host and Shirleene Robinson for their considerable time and effort in developing, adapting, and testing the workshop material and practical exercises, optimising their presentations for an online environment. Their preparation and friendly professionalism ensured a warm and interactive space for our enthusiastic attendees across the entire day.

After three years co-presenting *History Matters* alongside the Professional Historians Association NSW & ACT, and generously hosted by the State Library of NSW, our final seminar will be held online in November. *History Matters* has been a successful, diverse, and stimulating series we worked so passionately to bring to you on the first Wednesday of every month. It has been illuminating to hear from so many speakers about their practice and insights and create a platform for regularly sharing knowledge and experience about all forms and applications of history. We sincerely hope everyone enjoyed it as much as we did in creating the program for you - and many thanks to our organising committee, all our presenters and chairs, and everyone who attended in person and online.

Heartfelt appreciation to our PHA colleagues, who we look forward to working together with on future events of mutual interest to our members. Recordings from the 2020 seminars are available on our website, and the 2021 seminars will appear online soon.

We are mindful that our members are located across NSW and the ACT. In future a combination of online and in person events and training offered throughout the year will go a long way in ensuring everyone is included and can take part in events and professional development no matter their location.

I hold my biggest thanks for my fellow committee members who continue to work together and contribute their personal time and expertise in supporting our members and the objectives of Oral History NSW. From hosting online events, producing our monthly newsletter *Network News*, organising speakers, responding to enquiries from members, facilitating workshops and presentations – I truly appreciate all that you do. Special thanks to Kylie Andrews who is stepping down as Secretary, for all the great energy and enthusiasm she brought to the role which truly is the heart of our committee.

As always we thank you, our members, for your continued support, and warmly encourage you to contact us with your feedback and suggestions, as we continue to champion and strengthen our oral history community. The events of the last two years have highlighted now more than ever how important it is to record our stories, memories, and experiences, and to preserve and share them so we can continue to learn from each other well into the future.

**Maria Savvidis**  
**President**  
**Oral History NSW**

