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## ORAL HISTORY NETWORK NEWS

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## Oral History NSW Annual General Meeting elects office-bearers for 2018-2019

At its Annual General Meeting on 8 September 2018, **Oral History NSW** elected the following office-bearers:

|                 |                           |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| President:      | Shirleene Robinson        |
| Vice President: | Scott McKinnon            |
| Treasurer:      | Andrew Host               |
| Secretary:      | Isobelle Barrett Meyering |
| Public officer: | Bruce Carter              |

Other committee members:

Minna Muhlen-Schulte, and Maria Savvidis.



## Oral History Australia Journal No. 41, 2019 Call for papers – Special issue: *Oral History and the Emotions*

*See the full call for papers [HERE](#) for more detail on the theme,  
and where to forward contributions.*

Contributions are invited in three categories:

**A.** Papers on the theme 'Oral History and the Emotions'. Papers in Category A may be submitted to the Oral History Australia Editorial Board for peer-review.

**Deadline (for Category A papers submitted for peer-review): 31 March 2019**

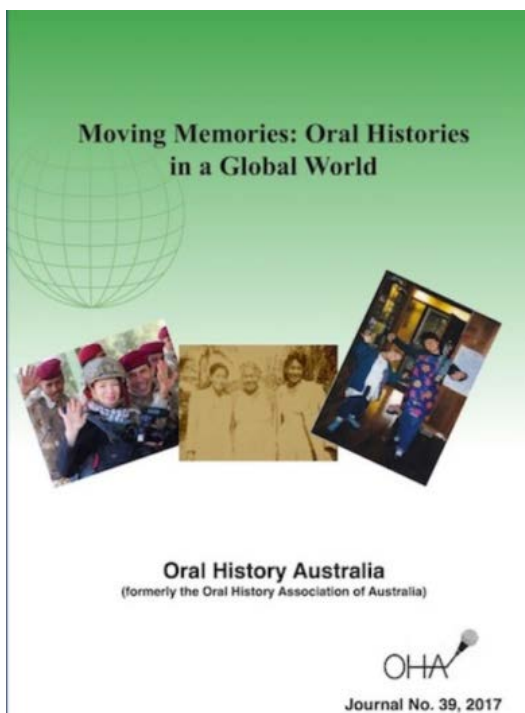
**Deadline (for Category A papers not submitted for peer-review): 31 May 2019**

**B.** Articles/project reports describing specific projects or conference reports, the information gained through them, and principal outcomes or practice issues identified in the process.

**Deadline: 31 May 2019**

**C.** Reviews of books and other publications from Australia or elsewhere that are of interest to the oral history community: may include reviews of static or internet-available exhibitions, or any projects presented for a public audience.

**Deadline: 1 April 2019**



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### **Sandra Blamey**

Sandra joined the Oral History NSW in 2000 after a 20 year career working for several of the largest overseas aid not-for-profit associations managing community development projects across the Pacific, SE Asia, India, Bangladesh and Africa. This experience offered her opportunities to hear first-hand the stories of many people as they talked about their hopes for their children and local communities and worked together to make them strong and resilient.

Sandra commenced recording oral histories for several local libraries, completed a Diploma in Public History at UTS, joined Oral History NSW Committee in 2001 becoming President in 2010 and a member of national Oral History Australia committee at a critical time in the Association's life. Sandra's many years of experience in fostering community development

both in Australia and overseas led to her commitment to see the strengthening of the association to meet current governance standards for not-for-profit organizations and bring the Association to greater effectiveness in both promoting and preserving oral histories. Alongside a significant administrative load Sandra found much enjoyment and satisfaction in developing opportunities to build up communities of oral history practice around New South Wales and encouraging archiving and use of oral histories.

What Sandra loves most about this work is the fascination, sense of privilege and discovery in sitting down with someone who is prepared to share something of their life experience. She feels an awareness of others' personal lives and histories does influence our response to the broader world.



### **Virginia Macleod**

Virginia grew up in London. After qualifying as a physiotherapist and travelling in the Pacific and Australia, she studied social anthropology and South Asian history at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University. She moved to Australia in 1978. She ran a local studies collection for Pittwater Council for 15 years and has worked as a freelance historian for over twenty years, completing a MA in Public History at the University of Technology Sydney in 2003.

She has written several historical publications including *Liverpool Migration History Project* for Casula Powerhouse in 2009, *Uncovering Rockdale's Migration Heritage Story*, 2013. She has curated exhibitions *The Nature of Manly* and *Summer Days, The holiday house on the Northern Beaches* for Manly Art Gallery & Museum. She created a historical interpretation wall for a shopping centre in Balgowlah, and another at Shellharbour.

Virginia has recorded interviews for the National Library of Australia project: *Forgotten Australians and former child migrants*, as well as City of Sydney Council oral history projects: *Work in the City* and *Shelter*. She has enjoyed projects interviewing: long-term residents of Randwick; migrants in Rockdale about their appreciation of local parks; those working in the thoroughbred industry and stables in Randwick; staff and parents at NSW regional childcare centres; family carers for people living with mental illness; employees of a pharmaceutical factory; environmental activists; and individuals.

Image: (L) Oral History NSW President Shirleene Robinson and (R) Virginia Macleod

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## Shirleene Robinson is new Head of Oral History at the National Library of Australia

Hearty congratulations to Oral History NSW President, and prominent oral historian, academic, author and public commentator Dr Shirleene Robinson, who will be taking up one of Australia's most senior oral history posts as the **Senior Curator Oral History** and **Indigenous Programs** at the National Library of Australia (NLA).

Dr Robinson starts at the Library in mid-September 2018. An Associate Professor, she comes to the Library from Macquarie University where she has been the Vice Chancellor's Innovation Fellow in the Discipline of Modern History since 2011. She was a Rydon Fellow at King's College, London in 2013 and has also spent time in Hohhot, China as a Visiting Professor of Australian Studies.

Dr Robinson has managed or participated in a long list of significant oral history projects, including some in partnership with the National Library, such as the very successful, The Past in the Present: Australian Lesbian and Gay Life Stories.

Her work has extended across a range of areas in social history, public policy and contemporary Australia. Her PhD was in the field of Indigenous history after which she worked in the Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy. She lists her research interests as:

- the history of sexuality (including the construction of homosexual identities and homophobia)
- histories of HIV/AIDS (including volunteering)
- the history of LGBTIQ people in the military
- the history of childhood in national and transnational context (including the experiences of Aboriginal children)
- oral history as a method and practice.

## Artists Working with Oral History/ Oral Historians Working with Artists

**Presented by Oral History NSW in partnership with [Verge Gallery](#)**

VERGE  
GALLERY



A morning discussing ways in which artists have worked with oral history – the practice of making memories through a planned interview between two people. How are narratives being used as a resource in the production of creative work? If digital technologies mean that oral history is more readily available to be worked with than ever before, what ethical challenges do artists working with oral history have to consider? How is the interpretive capacity of oral history being extended through contemporary artistic practice?

The discussion will be led by Oral History NSW committee member **Dr Paula Hamilton**, adjunct Professor of History at the University of Technology. Other participants:

**Deborah Beck.** An artist who has had solo exhibitions in Sydney and Melbourne and participated in multiple group exhibitions throughout Australia.

**Fabri Blacklock's** family are Nucoorilma/Ngarabal people from Tingha and Glenn Innes and Biripi people from Dingo Creek in NSW. A textile artist, Fabri's work involves the revival and teaching of NSW Aboriginal women's artistic practices such as possum skin cloak-making and weaving.

**Therese Sweeney**, an artist who has used oral history to inform her practice in photography & video, and has worked with communities in south-west Sydney, Kings Cross and the NSW south coast.

*See more detail on presenters and the event [HERE](#).*

**Saturday 3 November 2018, 11 am – 1 pm, Verge Gallery, City Road, Darlington.**

Tickets available soon through Eventbrite

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## Placing memory: Oral History in Site-Specific Audio Projects

Presented by Oral History NSW  
and the Australian Centre for Public History, UTS

**When:** 5:30 pm–7:00 pm **Thursday, 11 October 2018**

**Where:** University of Technology, Sydney: Bldg. 10, Level 14, Room 201

*No fees or booking required*



In this panel discussion, we will investigate a range of place-based heritage, art and public history projects that have positioned oral history recordings within particular sites. Through exhibitions, art installations, soundscapes and digital apps, listeners can hear memories of a neighbourhood, street or building while visiting or moving through the space.

This offers an immersive connection to the history of a site, creating links between past and present. A panel of historians, geographers and artists will consider the use of oral history across disciplines and the interactions between sound, place and memory in their work.

The discussion will be led by Oral History NSW Vice President **Dr Scott McKinnon**, Vice Chancellor's Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Australian Centre for Cultural Environment Society and Space (ACCESS), University of Wollongong. Scott is an oral historian and geographer with a research background in geographies of memory, memories of disaster and geographies and histories of sexuality. He is the Vice President of community history organisation Pride History Group and has collaborated on a number of oral history-based projects exploring Sydney's LGBTIQ history.

**Dr Sarah Barns** is a creative producer and practice-led researcher whose work explores the emerging interfaces for archives-based placemaking and storytelling, working across the mediums of sound, digital projection, digital dashboards and interactive media in public places. She is Co-Director of creative placemaking practice Esem Projects and research fellow at the Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University.



**Catherine Freyne** is an award-winning historian and audio producer. She worked at the ABC as a researcher, reporter and radio features producer for 13 years. Her audio documentaries won the NSW Premier's History Award in 2012 and 2014.

**Annie McKinnon** is the director of About Turn, an emerging interaction design and creative technology agency. About Turn boasts a talented team of associates and a well-equipped design and fabrication studio in St Peters. Annie completed a B Sound and Music Design at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) in 2012.



**Jane Stratton** is the Creative Director of the Think+DO Tank Foundation, and the concept founder and director of Against the Tide: A Highway West, an interactive audio experience set on the waters of the Parramatta River.

For more detail on panellists see [HERE](#).

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## Oral History Hub established at University of South Australia

In July several members of Oral History Australia SA/NT attended the University of SA launch of the new **Oral History Hub** or **ohh**. This is an initiative of the School of Psychology, Social Work and Social Policy, and the School of Creative Industries at UniSA, and has been driven by Professor Kurt Lushington, Dr David Sweet and Dr Sue Anderson. OHA SA/NT envisages the Hub will be a boon for oral history in South Australia.

The Oral History Hub has a vision of providing critically researched and easy online access of oral histories and digital stories across, the wide-ranging genres of history, cultural inclusion and diversity, the arts, education, well-being and community interests.

See [HERE](#) for more information about **ohh**, including a short video.



## Voyage of the Mudlarks – a Miraculous War-time Survival



Louise Darmody posted the following on Facebook on 11 September 2018:



"I've been transcribing the official war time report about the survival of an Royal Australian Air Force crew and one Papuan man in Papua New Guinea in August 1942. We've been fortunate enough to find some of the families of the survivors but still need help with finding the families of these men: Sgt Harrie Howes, 2nd Pilot, Sgt Casimaty 1st Engineer, Sgt. Hank Kilsby and George Edwards, Rigger.

"Do any of these names ring a bell? Can you please share the link to this story as we'd love to track down the families of these legends."

See [HERE](#) to read more about this story



## NLA's Rob Willis calls for help – to help drought-hit farmers

National Library of Australia oral historian and folklorist Rob Willis, who hails from Forbes in Central West NSW, one of the hardest-hit drought areas, listens to farmers' stories, good and bad, and collects them to include in the National Library of Australia's collection. Through this work, Willis wants to help farmers around the country – and maybe even bring a bit of light relief to these hard times.

"Over the years, we have been collecting weather folklore for the NLA," he said. "Now, I want to bring it all together and would love some help to do so." Willis is keen to collect such stories, anecdotes, old sayings, songs – anything that will help farmers know they're not alone and that they do have support.

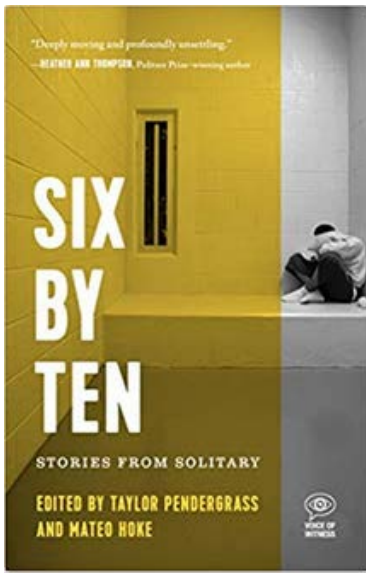
"Like the farmer who told us that in the last severe drought, when the farm was a dust-bowl and they were re-cycling the washing water, she would water a patch of khaki weed outside the laundry window ... just to see something green."

"I'd like to put all these stories together and make them available for everyone to read and listen to – help farmers understand they're not alone."



Listen [HERE](#) to the story that started it all, and see links to listen to some oral histories in this series.

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## Six by Ten: Stories from Solitary

Edited by Taylor Pendergrass & Mateo Hoke

Voice of Witness series, Oct. 2018

Six by ten feet (1.8 by 3.1 metres). That's the average size of the cells in which tens of thousands of people incarcerated in the United States linger for weeks, months, and even decades in solitary confinement.

With little stimulation and no meaningful human contact, these individuals struggle to preserve their identity, sanity, and even their lives. In thirteen intimate narratives, *Six by Ten* explores the mental, physical, and spiritual impacts of America's widespread embrace of solitary confinement, through stories from those subjected to solitary confinement, family members on the outside, and corrections officers.

Read more detail [HERE](#). Purchase through Amazon [HERE](#).



## Ron Grainer – Australian composer of iconic theme music

**Ronald Erle "Ron" Grainer** (1922–1981) was an Australian composer who worked for most of his professional career in the United Kingdom. Grainer wrote the theme tunes to *Maigret* (1960), *Steptoe and Son* (1962) and *The Prisoner* (1967), but his most memorable and enduring composition is the theme to *Doctor Who* (1963 –).

In a 1966 interview by Binny Lum held by the **National Film and Sound Archive**, Grainer talks about his life and career in London, and how he approached composing for television.



Listen to the interview [HERE](#).  
(15 min 50 sec)



## Dancing the Night Away

Recent post from Sally Stephenson's blog

Dances were popular entertainment in cities and country towns through much of the twentieth century. Often the dances served as fund-raisers for local community groups, or during World War II, for the Fighting Forces Comfort Fund and the Red Cross.



Listen [HERE](#) to extracts from oral history interviews with **Joy Craill** and **Harry Portlock**, courtesy of the State Library of South Australia (OH 829-[12](#) and [5](#)).



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- **2018 Annual ASRA Conference**

*Music, History and Technology*

**Alexandria NSW**, 7–8 November 2018, Studios 301, 3B Ellis Avenue

See more details, including sub-themes [HERE](#).

CONFERENCES etc. – Overseas



- **Oral History Association 2018 Annual Meeting**  
*Oral history in our challenging times*

**Quebec, Canada**, 10–13 October 2018

See details [HERE](#).



- **National Oral History Association of New Zealand**

*The Voice in Time and Space*

*Te Waha Kairongorongo e* <sup>1</sup>

**Hamilton NZ**, 27–29 November 2018. See details [HERE](#).

<sup>1</sup> The phrase 'waha kai rongorongo' refers to a pleasant voice or singing voice. It is used here to refer to the voice of the past. See 'He Tangi mo Hinekauika', Ngā Mōteatea, p. 338.



- **Oral History Society**

*Oral History @ Work. Recording Change in Working Lives*

Prifysgol Abertawe – Swansea University, **U.K.**

5–6 July 2019

Download **CALL FOR PAPERS** [HERE](#),

deadline 14 December 2018

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### Membership of Oral History NSW Inc. gives you:

- Regular Seminars and Workshops.
- Opportunities for informal exchange of ideas and experience.
- Biennial National Oral History Conferences.
- Subscription to the annual **Oral History Australia Journal**.
- **Oral History Network News**, the monthly email newsletter keeping you in touch with current topics and events of interest to oral historians. Notices received requesting oral historians for particular projects are also published here.
- Awards and Grants – the Oral History Australia **Hazel de Berg Award for Excellence in Oral History** recognises oral historians who have made an outstanding contribution to oral history in Australia over a considerable period of time. See more about the award & past recipients [HERE](#).  
From time to time Oral History NSW makes available grants to members undertaking research based on, or concerning oral history, who wish to participate or present papers at an international oral history conference.
- ALSO, as Oral History NSW is an affiliated member of the **Royal Australian Historical Society NSW** all members may attend the RAHS Conference at members' rates. See the RAHS website [HERE](#).

**Oral History Network News** is published by **Oral History NSW** for its members and all others in the wider community with an interest in oral history.

*Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of Oral History NSW, and information on services does not imply endorsement.*

### DO YOU HAVE A CONTRIBUTION?

Letters/comments – anecdotes – news items –  
links to websites using oral history –  
relevant resources for oral historians.

Closing date for items for the next issue (November 2018) is

**27 October 2018.**

Forward copy to the Editor: [networknews@oralhistorynsw.org.au](mailto:networknews@oralhistorynsw.org.au)

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