



## President's Report 2021–2022

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It gives me great pleasure to present the President's Report for 2021–2022.

The committee's activities were able to return to almost normal after the previous year's difficulties caused by Covid-19. However, it was still quite a different year from the usual format. For almost the first time since Oral History Tasmania was formed, there was no seminar of any kind. This was of course due to the expectation that it would be replaced by the national Oral History Australia conference in October 2021.

We were still planning to go ahead with *Oral History in Troubling Times: Opportunities and Challenges* up until September. However, when both Victoria and New South Wales went back into Covid lockdown which involved the bulk of our speakers, we had to seriously consider moving the whole conference online. There was lengthy consultation with the national and other states' committees which resulted in near-unanimous support for a face-to-face conference, especially because so many had experienced an 18-month period of constant online meetings. The conference was therefore postponed to October 2022, with the addition of an extra half day on Sunday morning to cater for more speakers.

Luckily we lost no money, with the Tramsheds Function Centre rolling over the deposit for twelve months, and the Grand Chancellor refunding the dinner deposit. Jen Thompson's conference scholarship was also rolled over until 2022, although unfortunately work commitments eventually led to her withdrawal.

Locals were still interested in attending Auntie Patsy Cameron's post-conference cultural tour of the Gorge. It was a pity she had to withdraw for personal reasons, but she recommended Geoff McLean of Wallaby Tours as a replacement. His fascinating walk and kind weather ensured it was a memorable day for those who attended. Unfortunately, a snap 3-day Covid lockdown in the south of the state prevented a number of registered attenders from travelling north, so in the event only 11 people attended. We were relieved that the conference itself was not going ahead at that time.

After a short break 2022 has again been a year of conference planning. Although some speakers from 2021 are unable to participate in 2022, a number of other people are now able to present. It is especially pleasing that our keynote speaker Mark Cave will be able to come from New Orleans; our grateful thanks go to the Launceston Historical Society who have helped sponsor his visit. Other speakers are coming from Canada, New Zealand and Scotland.

We were delighted that Pro Vice-Chancellor Kate Darian-Smith from the University of Tasmania's College of Arts, Law and Education also offered sponsorship which has allowed for the inclusion in the program of well-known Australian writer Kim Mahood.

The usual May oral history workshop was advertised, this year in Launceston, but there was little interest so it was cancelled. It is possible that people preferred to wait until the conference.

There has been some change in financial matters in the past year. The annual national Journal, now called *Studies in Oral History*, has recently been made available in an online version only. After a period of assessment it became clear that the big saving on printing costs meant that Oral History Australia could reduce its capitation charge per state member from \$15 to \$10. As a result all membership fees have been reduced by \$5 for the financial year 2022-23. On the other hand the hire charge for the Fostex digital recorder has been increased from \$20 to \$30. Finally, the necessity of refunding 2021 conference registration fees led Oral History Tasmania to retire the cheque book and fully embrace online banking.

It is with regret that I have to advise that Alison Johnston has stood down from the committee. She has been a very reliable Minutes Secretary since August 2016 and we will miss her. After Jai Paterson stood down from the committee last year we were pleased to welcome Virginia Greenhill to our deliberations, and I thank her along with other committee members Jon Addison, Karin Lê, Leonie Prevost and Cindy Thomas. A special thank you must go to our redoubtable treasurer Lana Wall whose task was made more onerous by the necessity of refunding all the 2021 registration fees. And as always I would like to thank the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery for its continued support.