



Northern Territory Archives Service Terms of Reference – Oral History Advisory Committee

Overall objective

To establish an Oral History Advisory Committee to provide independent advice and recommendations regarding the Oral History Collection. The recommendations will inform future directions for the Oral History Unit.

Background

In 1979, the Northern Territory Government established an oral history program within the Chief Minister's Department. In 1985 this work became the responsibility of a unit of the Northern Territory Archives Service (NTAS). By 2011, over 2000 sound recordings of interviews have been deposited with the NTAS.

The Oral History Association's explanation of Oral History:

- Oral History is the recording of memories of people's unique life experiences. Often the only way to find out about the past is to ask someone who knows about it.
- Oral history creates a record or supplements existing ones. Through oral history, the past comes alive. People can be much more interesting than documents.
- Oral history preserves the past for now and for the future.
- The recording of oral history is a two-way process in which someone shares memories with an interviewer who has carefully planned an interview.
- Oral history preserves voices, accents and vocabularies of individuals interviewed.

Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the Committee are:

- a. Provide strategic advice on the Collection Policy and Guidelines, to ensure the collection builds on and links to other resources, collecting the memory of the Territory.
- b. Build and define co-operative relationships to encourage others to undertake oral history projects.
- c. Management of competing priorities to ensure the collection is preserved and is discoverable to the public.

Scope

The Committee's focus will include:

- a. Developing selection criterion and guidelines which will address requirements for full transcription and

determining if oral histories:

- have lasting national or Territory-wide significance; and/or,
 - address a unique subject with probable implications for future research, and/or,
 - link to existing content already available.
- b. Ensure the collection is preserved appropriately and is discoverable to both professional historians and those with a non-professional, potentially family interest in exploring the historical records.

Scope restrictions

While the Committee will provide advice and recommendations, the decisions regarding the day to day management of the Oral History Unit will remain the responsibility of NRETAS.

Membership

The Committee's membership will consist of:

- The Manager, Oral History Unit, NTAS
- Arts and Culture division representative (with a history background)
- External representatives with sound historical research background and/or knowledge of Territory history
- A National Archives of Australia Darwin representative, with sound understanding of Indigenous issues and Northern Territory social history.

Meetings

The Committee will meet bi-annually, at the request of the Manager, Oral History Unit.

Reporting

The Committee will report to the Executive Director of the Arts and Culture division, bi-annually through the Director, NTAS.