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TOCAH Newsletter Eleven

June 2026

Our Vision To seek out, collect, preserve, promote and share Australian country history.

People from country Australia want their stories preserved for future generations. Treasury of Country Australian History (TOCAH) Inc. is an association committed to safeguarding country history. Our goal is to build an archive that protects the heritage and memories of rural life, preserving documents and stories from individuals, families, properties, businesses, and organisations.

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YOU CAN HELP

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS TO HELP WITH

Oral History Interviews
Oral History Transcript Editing
Google Workspace
Archiving our Collections
Website/Facebook Content Managers
Assistance with TOCAH Operations
Promotion and Marketing

WE NEED INTERVIEWEES

People who have lived in Country Australia Your stories are important and need preserving

Name Our Newsletter

We need a name for our newsletter. Can you come up with a catchy title which reflects us, our country heart, our aims and ambitions? Send your suggestions to us at info@tocah.au

President's Report

This has been another busy period with the Strategic Planning Exercise, and it has been interesting and rewarding developing our Governance Policy and looking at ways for TOCAH to move forward. Thanks to Sharyn Innes and the work of the committee, we can see possibilities for new directions, alliances and activities.

Report on U3A Network Qld State Conference 2026, 13-14 May 2026, University of Sunshine Coast Auditorium

As a U3ASC member I attended the conference and some interesting points arose. A major topic for discussion at the conference was 'healthy ageing' and U3A Network Qld (particularly U3A

Sunshine Coast) and the University of the Sunshine Coast discussed working together to support healthy ageing research.

What I took away from the conference:

1. University of the Sunshine Coast (Uni SC) is one of few universities in Australia doing medical research into dementia, mental health and ageing, and is engaged in looking for new solutions (through the Thompson Institute).
2. TOCAH Grant Applications Given the focus on 'healthy ageing', future grant applications could use this as a key theme.
3. TOCAH Oral History Partnership After discussions with the President of U3ASC at the conference, I recommend we contact the U3ASC committee regarding oral history interviewing of their members, and training U3ASC members as OH volunteers to interview fellow members. We may be able to raise funds for TOCAH through the training. This discussion will start in June 2026.
4. Student Volunteers for TOCAH A discussion point was the difficulty of obtaining volunteers for all voluntary organisations, particularly young people. U3ASC is working with the Uni SC for student volunteer and perhaps TOCAH could do the same.

Google Workspace

Each committee member has been assigned a personal workspace, and shared documents are available to all current and future committee members, facilitating the development of a comprehensive archive of TOCAH records. I have uploaded material to the Workspace TOCAH archives and, with others will develop policies and procedures for uploading. The establishment of systematic protocols and procedures for the naming and uploading of files and folders is in progress.

TOCAH Website - www.tocah.au

We have a volunteer who is uploading content to the website for us. We will happily accept more volunteers for other social media. We need more content and more organisation before we launch the updated website. If you can provide content for the website, please send it to info@tocah.au

Jan Partridge, President

Collections Report

Oral History Interviews

We need more volunteer interviewers, and I will be advertising for them in mid-June. We will be exploring joint interviews with other organisations to expand our collections and support their oral history efforts. We also need more narrators and will be advertising for more of those as well. Training will take place at the end of June, and we now have kits available for volunteers.

Transcriptions of our Oral History Recordings

We have begun transcribing the oral history interviews, and as happens when developing new strategies, there is a need for planning and instruction. Transcribing is quite a complex process, and I have realised we need two levels of volunteers: transcript editors and transcript reviewers and am working my way through developing policies and processes. We will advertise for transcript editors and reviewers when we have all the processes in place.

Print Collection

We are still gathering print material: books, booklets, magazines etc but lately we have been concentrating on business cards and phone books. If you have any items that you think would suit our collection, please get in touch with us at info@tocah.au

Find Us At The Expo

The 2026 Brisbane Valley History Expo is taking place this year on Saturday 24th October at the Esk Civic Centre, 35 Esk Hampton Road, Esk, from 9am to 2pm. There will be approximately 30 History Groups attending this year with a number of keynote speakers including historians and research experts. Sharing, researching and preserving historical information and records is the aim of the event. Come and chat with us at the Expo.

In Our Collection

1999 Nelia Branch of QCWA 75 Years. Donated by Lyn Kelman

A collection of memories including Nelia District history.

Nelia is an outback town near Julia Creek in the Shire of McKinlay, Queensland. The area was named by explorer William Landsborough after one of his wife's friends. European settlement began in the 1870s with the establishment of the Willibah and Benannee runs.

Nelia Post Office opened on 23 June 1909, following the opening of a receiving office in 1908. The townsite was surveyed in 1912, and the first land sales were held in 1913.

From the Townsville Daily Bulletin Saturday 26 May 1928, page 11 (trove.nla.gov.au)

NELIA BRANCH

The Nelia Branch of the C.W.A. held their first meeting of the year on May 12th. The attendance owing to the disastrous drought we are experiencing was very small.

Present: Mrs. R. Telford, President. Mrs. E. B. Ranclaud. Mrs. G. Douglas. Mrs. A. Douglas. Mrs. Hall, Mrs. Propsting and Mrs. Mitchell. A vote of thanks was moved by Mrs. Telford to Mrs. C. Powne for acting as secretary. Carried. On the motion of Mesdames Telford and Propsting after the next meeting which will be held on the 9th. June, it was decided to hold a dance to raise funds to de-fray cost of damage caused to rest room by the cyclone in February last. The financial statement was tabled and received. It was considered that the tuning of the piano was not quite satisfactory and it was resolved to ask the firm's representative to call again and look at it. A vote, of thanks to the chair concluded the meeting.

Qantas by George

The Remarkable Story of George Roberts, written by Paul Byrnes.

This book tells the story of an Australian larrikin driven by a love of engines, aeroplanes and speed—someone who witnessed and took part in many major moments in the first century of Australian aviation. George's story is engaging, often very funny, and distinctly Australian. Many of these stories and photographs have not been published before.

George Roberts was born in 1909. At age eight, he saw his first aeroplane when it landed in a paddock near his home. Two years later, he took his first flight in a flying boat on Moreton Bay.

Before joining Qantas, George and his older brother Norm, who also became a Qantas engineer, spent much of their lives building, racing and sometimes crashing planes and cars. Long before the term existed, they were hot rodders, modifying Model T Fords and racing them along Southport's Main Beach before the area became known as the Gold Coast. They also built aircraft, including the tiny Flying Flea, using plans from *Newnes Practical Mechanics* magazine. Their Flying Flea, which genuinely flew, is now displayed in the Queensland Museum.

Fire at Emerald

Five Shops and Dwelling Destroyed.

EMERALD, February 21 — Another devastating fire, similar to that of four years ago, was narrowly averted this morning at 2.30, when a fire broke out in the centre of a line of wooden shops in the main street of Emerald, on the western end of the town.

A warning was given by the railway engine crews which were getting ready for the arrival of the trains, both from the west and east, which arrive around this hour. Save for this timely warning, the fire might have been much more disastrous. As it was, if it were not for the local fire brigade, the Railway Hotel, J. Goggin's chemist shop and newsagency, M. Davis draper's shop, H. Barry's barber shop, Winchcombe Carson's office and another vacant shop would have been destroyed. The fire appeared to commence at the rear of the buildings. It had a good hold and was easily discernible when the alarm was given all over the town.

Fortunately, there was no breeze. The flames rose directly upward, and rapidly spread, to the adjoining shops and residence of Mr. H.H. Penrose, who was absent visiting his son on his property at Blackwater, and who is the owner of all the buildings destroyed. The buildings had been erected many years ago.

Within an hour five shops, including the residence mentioned, were burnt to the ground. The Grand Hotel on the opposite corner, at one period was in danger, but thanks to there being no wind, this escaped the flames. All worked hard against great odds. At one time the spectators shouted a warning, when the flames were undermining the upper story of the Railway Hotel, where they were using every effort to stop it from spreading. Time and time again it seemed as though the fire would win, but, finally, it was got under control, due to the Fire Brigade and assistance by Acting Sergeant Cronk and Constable Ash.



The buildings destroyed were Mr. Penrose's residence, a vacant shop on the corner; J. Birch's jeweller; a butcher's shop; Dumbleton's bakery and a vacant shop next to Badry's barber shop; numbering five shops and one residence.

Syd and Harry Dumbleton inside their bakery shop 1939

Sources

Trove.nla.gov.au - Townsville Daily Bulletin, Saturday 22 February 1941, page 6

John Oxley Library

Thank You

We appreciate the assistance given to us by all our members and supporters. Your contributions are very welcome and are helping us to achieve our goals.



Sunshine Coast Council



Sunshine Mitre 10 Nambour



Maroochy RSL