

## TIPS FOR CONDUCTING ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

How do I ask the questions?

In general, have a basic idea of the themes that will be covered- ex. Work history, growing up in a particularly suburb.

- Have your first question well planned- later questions will flow from initial answer, keep this mostly biographical and not too emotionally demanding.
- Remember that open rather than closed questions will led to more comprehensive answers given- for example instead of asking “ Was the main street of Newcastle busy in the 1960s?”, this could be worded “What was it like going to Hunter Street, Newcastle in the 1960s?” get them to personalise their answer to bring out some other stories.
- Remember silence is good, gives both the interviewer/interviewee to respond or reply in a meaningful and reflective way.
- Show you are interested by positive body language and being pleasant.
- Give interviewee time to respond to question, don't interrupt! Get them to clarify anything that you are unsure about, it is important you may understand what is being said. It is OK to go back to re-ask a question if you don't think it have been answered fully.
- Don't be too worried if the interview goes off track, it may be that the interviewee has something interesting to say about another theme – this may be unexpected but just go with it!
- Ask for specific examples if the interviewee makes a general statement and you need to know more. Or you might say, "I don't understand. Could you explain that in more detail?"
- Ask follow-up questions and then ask some more.