

## ASRA Award 2012



Figure 1

### **To Tim and Ros Bowden for outstanding contributions to the recorded social history of Australia.**

Tim and Ros Bowden have both individually and collectively advanced the development and popular acceptance of recorded Oral History in Australia through their advocacy and their pioneering work as interviewers and broadcasters. Each began their careers at the ABC as pioneering broadcasters: Tim as a member of the first reporting team for the iconic current affairs program AM; whilst Ros was a groundbreaking program maker for the Coming Out Show.

Tim Bowden is the author of fourteen books and many radio documentary programs based on oral history ranging from the experiences of Australians in Antarctica, Papua New Guinea, Australian prisoners-of-war in Asia to the life and times of the Tasmanian Devil. His *Taim Bilong Masta* and *Prisoners of War: Australians Under Nippon* remain the two most comprehensive documentary series the ABC has produced. With 24 and 16 episodes respectively these series were each based on hundreds

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of hours of oral history interviews, all of which are held in the ABC's Radio Archive.

Ros Bowden is a foundation member of the Oral History Association of Australia NSW branch, and has produced broadcasts and publications including "Women of The Land", and "Being Aboriginal" for which she received the 1987 Human Rights Award in the Radio Documentary category.

Tim and Ros began introducing elements of Oral History into their radio productions from the 1970s, Tim in his programs produced within the ABC's Radio Drama and Features Department, and Ros in the Australian Women's Broadcasting Cooperative's "Coming Out Show".

Tim and Ros went on to play important roles in the ABC's Social History Unit. This broadcast production unit, established by Tim in 1985 and still in existence today, produced regular series of Oral History based programs such as Talking History, The Social History Feature and Word of Mouth exploring diverse aspects of the Australian experience with subjects and interviewees from all walks of life. The Bowdens made programs for all three series. Ros became Executive Producer of the Social History Unit in 1989 and successfully campaigned against ABC management's plans to disband the unit at that time.

Throughout their careers, both Tim and Ros have placed an emphasis on sound quality, and the importance of the sound recording as a document in its own right. Their broadcasts have given us the wonderful experience of hearing the stories of our history, in the voices of those people who lived them. They become the first husband and wife team to win the ASRA Award.

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### **Figures:**

1. Tim and Ros Bowden at the Australia Youth Hotel, Sydney, 20 September 2012, photograph by Melinda Barrie