



Launch and Winter Symposium – “Writing Tasmanian Lives” 22–24 June 2022

CALL FOR PAPERS

About us

Writing Lives is a new research program based in the School of Humanities at the University of Tasmania, harnessing existing expertise and building capacity in critical studies of life writing, biography, oral history, microhistory, history of ideas, memoir, and personal writing such as letters and diaries.

Our program is working to foster dialogue about life writing as a form and genre that crosses disciplinary boundaries and embraces possibilities offered by texts, objects, and nonhuman as well as human lives.

We are also working to engage community and cultural sector partners both within lutruwita/Tasmania and nationally in this exciting research area.

The symposium

To showcase the many possibilities offered by this field of research, we are delighted to announce the call for papers for our first symposium, to be held online over the afternoons of Wednesday 22, Thursday 23 and Friday 24 June 2022.

In this symposium we turn our focus to the local as we examine the challenges presented by the discipline and practice of biography and life-writing in and about Tasmania and Tasmanians.

The symposium program will encourage discussion about what is at stake – critically, creatively, historically, and ethically – in writing the life stories of Tasmanians, whether historically well-known or hitherto uncelebrated.

We are especially interested in exploring the following questions:

- What does it mean to write biography in lutruwita/Tasmania, about its residents (living or dead) or about the lives that have influenced our state’s history?
- How can we make personal histories and biographies in lutruwita/Tasmania visible to the broader community?
- How do we connect local life stories to national and international histories and communities?

- How does lutruwita/Tasmania feature in both human and more-than-human life stories throughout history?
- What role do collectors and archivists play in documenting and understanding Tasmanian lives?

Papers on the theme of *Writing Tasmanian Lives*, interpreted in its widest sense, drawing on scholarship and experience from the humanities, creative arts, social sciences, education, and natural science, and from other diverse fields such as library, museum, archives, and cultural studies, are encouraged.

We also welcome papers that engage with broader questions about life writing and biography that go beyond the local context, such as:

- What is life writing and what forms should it take?
- Whose lives should we examine?
- How does the form of life-writing change with the needs of the subject?
- How can we celebrate diversity through life writing, amplifying the voices of people who have been pushed into the margins of history and literature?
- How can we decolonise biography?
- Where lives have not been thoroughly documented, how can we make imaginative use of archival material?

Plenary events include a keynote address by [Dr Jessica White](#) (UniSA), about her work writing an ecobiography of Georgiana Molloy, and a panel conversation on writing Indigenous lives. More information about keynote speakers and events will be circulated closer to the date.

Proposal submissions and registration

Please email abstracts and proposals (200 words approx.) for a 20-minute presentation by Thursday, 14 April 2022 to: writing.lives@utas.edu.au

Submissions should also include your name, institutional affiliation where relevant, e-mail address, the title of your proposed paper, and a short bio (50 words approx.).

We will advise if your proposal has been accepted for inclusion in the program and provide further details of the registration process.

Event delivery and registration

At time of writing, this will be an online event with panel sessions delivered via Zoom.

If possible, some of the keynote plenary sessions and workshops will also take place in person in nipaluna/Hobart. Whether we proceed with any live components will be dependent on the COVID-19 situation and any restrictions that are in place, which will be considered nearer the time.