

PHA Member Survey on the Impact of COVID-19

A Follow-Up Report for Professional Historians Australia

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June 2022

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Question 17 – Do you have any suggestions as to how your state/territory PHA or Professional Historians Australia can assist you as a member at this time and in the future? 18

Question 18 – Have you donated to any fund set up to assist out-of-work historians or provided other support to historians, or are you aware of any such programs and support? 19

Question 19 – If yes to Q18 please specify (PHA respects your privacy if you would prefer not to specify)..... 19

Question 20 – Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey. Feel free to add additional comments here. 20

Appendix 1 - PHA Member Survey on the Impact of COVID-19: A Report for Professional Historians Australia 21

Executive Summary

This report presents data collected by Professional Historians Australia (PHA) from a member survey on the impact of COVID-19. The survey was conducted from November to December 2021 and included 20 questions. Forty-seven responses were received. PHA conducted a survey earlier in the pandemic in mid-2020, and data from both surveys are compared and contrasted in this report where appropriate. The initial survey report can be found in Appendix 1, and should be read alongside this report.

PHA commissioned both reports to not only create a historical record of the effects of the pandemic on its members, but also to ascertain the ways in which it could support and address the needs of its members. In response to the initial survey and report, PHA ascertained that members appreciated regular, meaningful communication. *Historia* was therefore made a shorter and more regular newsletter. In terms of state and territory branches, the Professional Historians Association of Queensland – PHA (Qld) – has used, and plans to use, its Zoom account for more frequent state-wide virtual gatherings. The Professional Historians Association of Victoria and Tasmania – PHA (Vic & Tas) – utilised the feedback from the survey to continue its Pay it Forward program and Drop-In Sessions, and to maintain its reduction in membership fees. In addition, PHA (Vic & Tas) set up an Advocacy Subcommittee due to feedback from the survey, with the subcommittee undertaking advocacy work regarding the funding of humanities education, the Uluru Statement from the Heart and history teaching. Survey results were also quoted by the PHA (Vic & Tas) Committee of Management in a letter to the Minister for Creative Industries in November 2020.

There was a significant decrease in the number of respondents in this survey (47), as opposed to the initial survey (187) in 2020. This could be due to several factors, such as members being less affected now than they were earlier in the pandemic. Members may also be feeling a sense of COVID-19 fatigue after living through the pandemic for almost two years (at the time of responding to the second survey).

Nonetheless, the survey provided insights into the negative impacts PHA members have seen and felt as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Similar to the previous survey, almost 60% of members felt that either their employment or income had been affected by COVID-19 and its impact on the Australian economy. The inability to complete research due to the closure of libraries and repositories, travel restrictions, and the postponement of projects and contracts remained impactful. Respondents continued to express their concerns for the arts and university sectors, and for cultural institutions. Specifically, members highlighted decreased funding, job-losses and fewer projects to tender for.

There were several suggestions provided by survey respondents as to how PHA and its state/territory-based associations could address the needs of members. In summary, a member of the Professional Historians Association (NSW & ACT) – PHA (NSW & ACT) – suggested that their association should support hybrid events, or consider having some events in-person and some online. Another PHA (NSW & ACT) member reflected on the value of the information provided by the association through various forms of communication throughout the pandemic. In addition, one member of the Professional Historians Association

of Western Australia – PHA (WA) – asked that their association continue the monthly bulletin of job vacancies. PHA (Vic & Tas) had the most respondents to this survey, and a variety of suggestions were provided by its members as to how it could continue to address their needs. In brief, these suggestions included: maintain regular communications; continue providing online events or an online option for events; remind relevant stakeholders about professional historians; advocate at the state government level; and lobby cultural institutions to remain open to professionals if lockdowns occur again in the future. (Further suggestions from PHA (Vic & Tas) members can be found under Question 16 below.)

To conclude, it seems as though the current climate is more positive than when the first survey was conducted in 2020. There remains, however, a sense of precariousness and unease about what the future will bring for the profession.

Background and Objectives

In response to the COVID-19 global pandemic, PHA has conducted two online surveys of its members. The primary aims of both surveys were to understand how members were tracking, how and to what degree their work had been affected by the pandemic, if any opportunities had arisen for members in response to the pandemic, and to gain some insights into whether members expected the impacts of the pandemic to be temporary, long-term, or permanent. The surveys will also provide a historical record of the experiences of PHA members during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The findings from the surveys have been, and will continue to be, utilised by PHA and the state/territory associations to advocate for historians and their place economically and socially in the community's recovery. In addition, the results will be drawn on to ascertain how best to address the needs of members, and determine what assistance can be offered to members in the future, at both a state and national level.

Survey Method

The online survey was distributed via email to all members of PHA through the relevant state/territory-based associations. The state/territory-based associations of PHA are:

- Professional Historians Association (NSW & ACT);
- Professional Historians Association (Vic & Tas);
- Professional Historians Association (Qld);
- Professional Historians Association (SA);
- Professional Historians Association (WA);
- Professional Historians Association (NT).

In total, 47 members completed the survey in 2021. PHA used the same method to circulate the survey in 2020 and 187 responses were received.

Survey Results

Question 1 – To which PHA do you belong?

Of the 47 respondents, the majority – 82.98% – were members of PHA (Vic & Tas), 10.64% belonged to PHA (WA) and 6.38% to PHA (NSW & ACT). There were no responses received from members of PHA (Qld), PHA (NT) or PHA (SA).

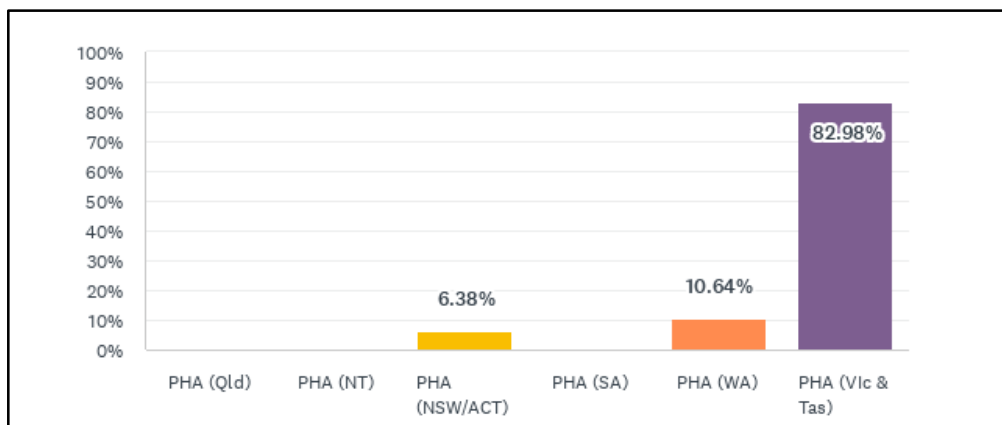


Figure 1: Responses to Question 1 – To which PHA do you belong?

Question 2 – How long have you been a PHA member?

Almost 30% of respondents (29.79%) indicated that they had been a member of their state/territory association for 10-20 years. A quarter (25.53%) of respondents had been a member for more than 20 years, and just under a quarter (23.40%) had been a member for 2-5 years. The smallest percentage had been members for less than 2 years (14.89%) and 5-10 years (6.38%).

In the 2020 survey, a similar number of respondents indicated they had been a member for 5-10 years (16.20%), 10-20 years (30.17%) and more than 20 years (24.58%). Slightly fewer members from the 2 to 5-year bracket (18.99%) responded to the earlier survey, and slightly more had been members for less than 2 years (10.06%).

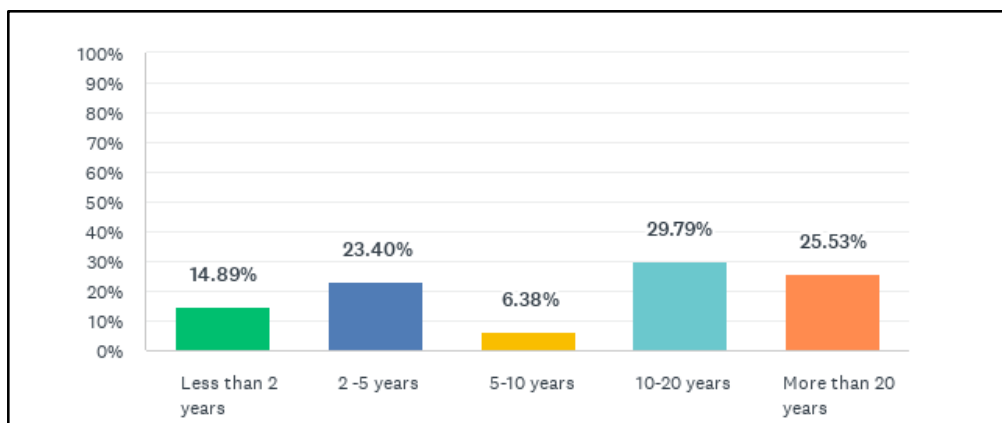


Figure 2: Responses to Question 2 – How long have you been a PHA member?

Question 3 – How would you describe your usual main source of income as a historian?

Approximately one-third of respondents (34.04%) received their main income as a historian through consultancy. The second largest group of respondents (23.04%) indicated that they obtained their income through other means. Those that provided further details as to their other forms of income indicated that they were:

- “Not earning income as a historian”
- Currently hold a PhD scholarship but worked previously as a consultant;
- Working as a public servant and instead “do some history outside of... employment as [an] interest”
- A “freelancer for [a] small history consultancy”;
- A “university professional staff member (non-academic)”;
- Working on commissioned histories for a university;
- Employed casually “with archaeologists on a project basis”;
- Working on commissions;
- A contract researcher;
- Unemployed;
- An “oral historian, research and transcriber”.

Seven respondents (14.89%) indicated that they obtain their main source of income as a casual academic, followed by four respondents each (8.51%) from the heritage profession, the public service or municipal government, and academia. The smallest percentages were those that worked in cultural institutions either permanently (6.38% or 3 respondents) or on a casual basis (4.26% or 2 respondents).

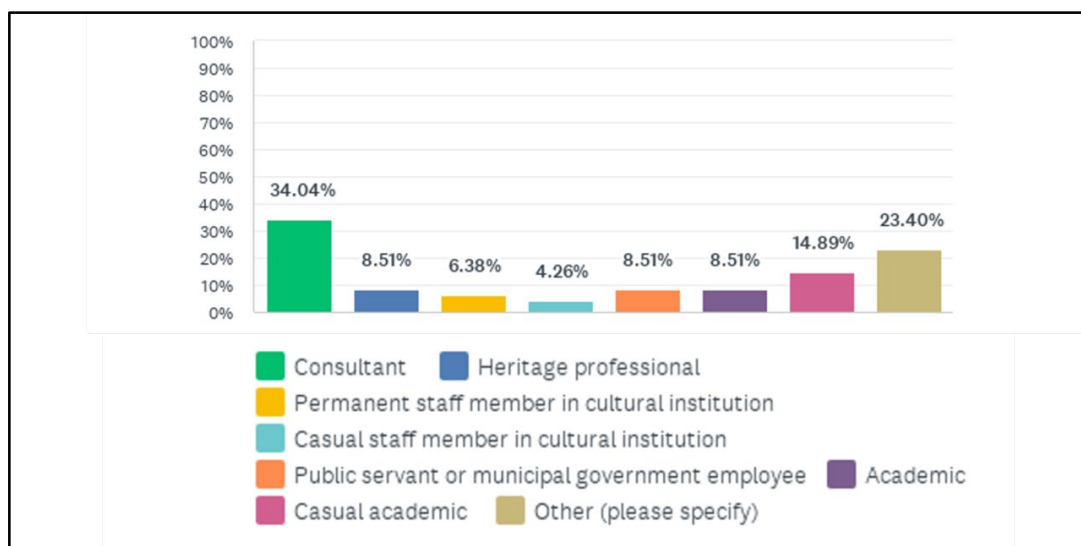


Figure 3: Responses to Question 3 – How would you describe your usual main source of income as a historian?

Question 4 – Do you consider that your employment or source of income has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the Australian economy?

Responses to Question 4 were not dissimilar to that of the 2020 COVID-19 survey. In 2021, employment or income had been affected for 28 of 47 respondents (or 59.57%), but had not been affected for 20 respondents (or 42.55%). According to the 2020 Survey Report, “111 of the 181 respondents (or 61.33%) felt as though their employment or source of income was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Whereas, by comparison, 73 respondents (or 40.33%) felt as though their employment or source of income was not affected.”

In terms of state and territory-based associations, all three respondents from PHA (NSW & ACT) stated their employment or income had been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. A further three members from PHA (WA) had been affected, and two had not. Finally, just over half of PHA (Vic & Tas) respondents (56.41% or 22) had their employment or income affected, whereas 18 respondents (46.15%) were not affected.

(Note: Although the survey indicates that 47 respondents answered this question, there are 48 answers recorded. As indicated in the responses to Question 5, one respondent answered both yes and no, which explains why this has occurred.)

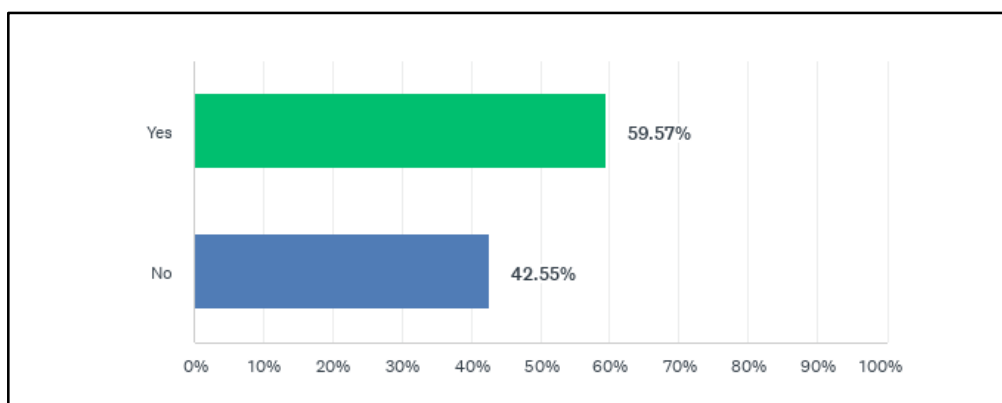


Figure 4: Responses to Question 4 – Do you consider that your employment or source of income has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the Australian economy?

Question 5 – if you answered yes to Q4, how have you been impacted?

Similar to 2020, the inability to complete research due to the closure of libraries/repositories saw the greatest number of responses (58.82%). This was followed by the inability to complete projects due to travel restrictions (41.18%), the postponement of projects/contracts (35.29%), and the scarcity of new projects to tender/apply for (23.53%). Both the cancellation of projects/contracts and the inability to complete oral history projects or community consultation due to social isolation restrictions received the same number of responses (17.65%).

“Answered ‘yes’ and ‘no’ because while my income hasn’t been affected, the closure of repositories and travel restrictions has made an impact on the quality of my work (in my belief).”

Almost a third of respondents (32.35%) indicated that there were other ways in which they had been impacted. Respondents described “less casual work in cultural institutions and universities and projects have been delayed/slower”, the inability “to advance career as hoped” such as through volunteer opportunities, and the inability “to find suitable

employment due to border closures and restrictions... lack of opportunities and experience”. Two respondents indicated that they had been impacted positively, with one respondent explaining that they had “gained employment after completing PhD because a vacancy appeared due to workload created for other staff during pandemic”, and another that they had experienced an increase in work. Alternatively, one respondent felt that their “planned future career in tertiary education [was] dead”. A respondent from PHA (NSW) also explained that they “had difficulty accessing archive documents... due to extended lockdowns”.

(Note: This question had only 34 respondents.)

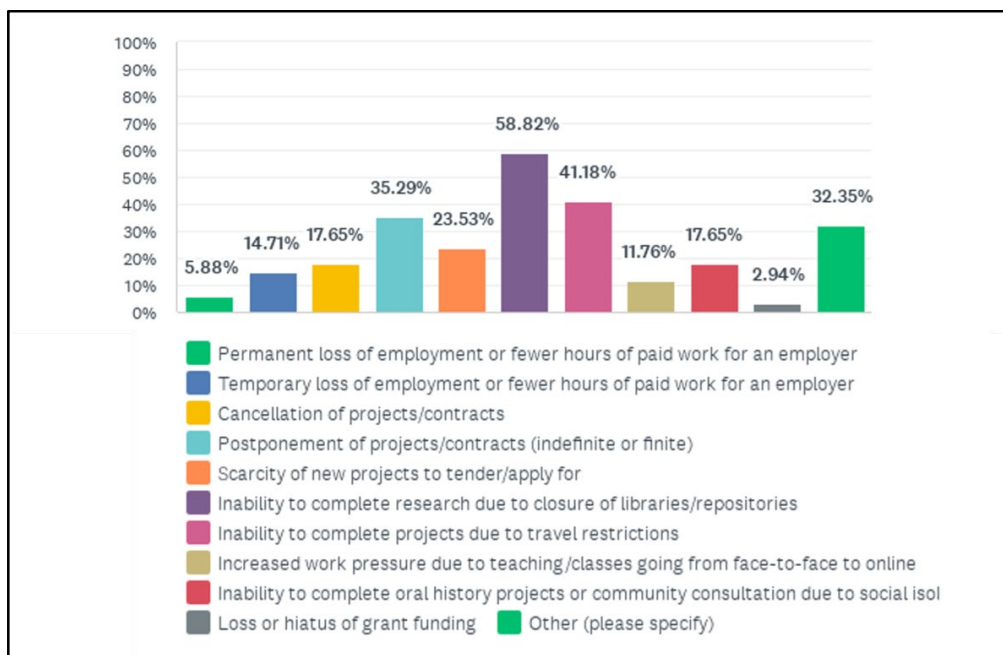


Figure 5: Responses to Question 5 – If you answered yes to Q4, how have you been impacted?

Question 6 – If the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted your income, have you been able to access other means of support?

Exactly half of respondents (50%) who had their income impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic were able to access other means of support, whereas one-fifth (20.59%) were not. Fourteen respondents (or 41.18%) provided an alternative answer to this question. Five of the respondents indicated that they had been able to access some form of government support,

such as JobKeeper, parent assistance, Centrelink payments and the age pension. One respondent answered that they were “obliged partly because of Covid restrictions to give up a commission”, whereas another stated that they were a casual examination invigilator.

(Note: This question had only 34 respondents.)

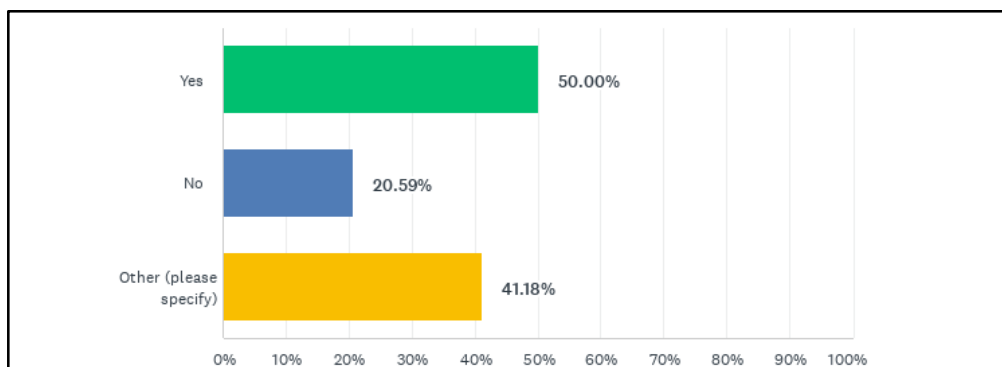


Figure 6: Responses to Question 6 – If the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted your income, have you been able to access other means of support?

Question 7 – If yes to Q6, what other means of support have you been able to access or what other response to your circumstances have you initiated? e.g. JobKeeper/JobSeeker or change of employment/career

Six of the 26 respondents to this question had accessed JobKeeper to support themselves at one point or another during the pandemic, and two received JobSeeker. Three respondents relied on their partners for support, one respondent received bonus payments on top of their single parent assistance payment, and a further four respondents mentioned superannuation, one specifically noting they received early access to their superannuation. Others were able to “teach online”, pick up “alternate/aligned work temporarily” or were employed in a second job. Another respondent indicated they continued working as a public servant, whereas another respondent stated that, in addition to JobKeeper, their business “also received a number of government grants during the latest lockdowns”.

As part of the 2020 COVID-19 Survey, some members had indicated that they were employed outside the history field or looking to “broaden [their] work base”, “looking and applying for other paid employment” or looking for a career change. Similar responses were not received in this follow-up survey.

(Note: This question had only 26 respondents.)

Question 8 – Has the COVID-19 crisis affected your family’s ability to work / maintain income in other ways (please indicate)?

A similar percentage of respondents in both surveys indicated that they had to share a workspace with other family members during COVID-19 (47.66% in 2020 and 47.06% in

2022). In the most recent survey, the responses regarding the need to care for relatives (32.35% or 11 respondents) and/or school children (29.41% or 10 respondents) were similar. In 2020, the “need to care for other relatives...” received 17.19% of responses, whereas the “need to care for/home school children...” received 14.84%. Further, a partner’s loss of income and/or working hours affected the least number of people in the 2021 survey, with only 4 respondents (11.76%) indicating this was the case.

Of the 34 respondents, 9 provided “other” responses, 7 of which explained that their family’s ability to work and/or maintain income was not affected. One respondent stated that their “housemate/tenant was out of work and [they] had to cover her”, and another experienced a relationship break-up.

(Note: This question had only 34 respondents.)

Question 9 – Can you comment on other ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic has affected your day-to-day life and any projections about how you feel it will affect your work and work opportunities over the next year or two?

The COVID-19 pandemic has seen a staggering increase in the number of people working from home, alongside a greater reliance on digital and online technologies for work and social life.

This trend is evident in both surveys. As part of the 2021 COVID-19 Survey, approximately one-fifth of respondents commented on the increased trend of working from home due to the pandemic. One respondent saw it as a positive change, as it meant no longer commuting into the city, another experienced more flexibility with working arrangements. Others, however, described the difficulties of working from home, such as juggling home learning and childcare with their work commitments, the difficulties of separating work life and domestic life, social isolation, and having no “off” time.

“... working from home means I now work 24/7 there is really no “off” time. This seems to be the new normal, as we transition back to onsite work we are still expected to be “available” outside of the old 9-5.”

Several respondents described how the pandemic had negatively impacted their work on various projects, particularly due the inability to travel, access materials in repositories, and conduct community engagement or interviews. One respondent described that their “ability to work has slowed and the ability of projects to move forward slowed, leading to work cascading”.

Another member commented on the job losses and restructuring experienced in the university sector, and the lack of government support for humanities having “impacted morale”. The same member also mentioned that “research opportunities and funding have reduced with a focus on links with industry and commercial outcomes”. Similarly, another respondent mentioned that “some work that would have been given to historians has gone to marketing/PR companies due to lack of time/resources”.

Others mentioned the effects on their wellbeing, such as the loneliness felt from lack of human contact and the inability to get the health benefits from leaving home to volunteer.

“The Covid-19 pandemic has been the hardest experience of my life, both professional and personally. It stretched me (and my family) beyond what I thought was possible.”

The difficulties surrounding childcare were also noted, as were the difficulties to maintain enthusiasm, manage space at home and remain engaged with the field in general. Another respondent described the pandemic as one of the hardest experiences of their life.

Alternatively, however, there were many respondents who commented on the positive effects of the pandemic. For example, one

respondent mentioned an increase in online webinars, events and digitised resources, which was mostly seen as a positive change. One respondent hoped there would be increased funding for digitising historical records, and another member stated that the change has positively impacted their “knowledge of online resources”. Other members were able to access more events due to them being made available online.

One member also described becoming “an expert host and interviewer” and adding technical and video editing skills to their repertoire because of the increase in digital mediums during the pandemic. In addition, this member felt that “clients can see the possibilities for hosting events online and the ongoing promotion of having video content available to their audiences”. They felt that “the increase in online content may help us all promote our work to more people, more easily”. One respondent mentioned that they had been busier at work in the last 12 months, and another had experienced a “forced slowdown”. Two other respondents found they have thrived given the opportunity to focus solely on their work.

In terms of the effect of the pandemic on work and work opportunities for the coming year or two, respondents expressed several potential positives and negatives. One respondent felt “more positive about work opportunities for the future”, with another feeling positive “about 2022 bringing new paid projects to research”. Another respondent felt that as their role was ongoing, they were “not too concerned about a lack of future opportunities”, however they thought it would be “difficult adjusting to office culture again”.

“This past year has been much easier as we only had a short lockdown... which did not affect working at home and supervising children simultaneously. I found that the greatest challenge in 2020.”

Five respondents reflected on the potential negative effects of the pandemic on their work and work opportunities over the next year or two. Three respondents expressed uncertainty about the future, with one respondent stating that they felt “the impact of Covid is just starting to hit my industry”. A further two respondents mentioned the lack of money, which would mean fewer jobs, that “funding opportunities are hotly contested and that there are so many fabulous historians competing for work”. More specifically, one respondent felt that “COVID-19 will continue to impact my travel, if not community engagement opportunities”. Another respondent stated that as their “current contract finishes next year”, they were

feeling “a little anxious about what the future holds”, and another stated that they “don’t feel it is over by a long chalk”.

(Note: This question had only 35 respondents.)

Question 10 – Do you have any thoughts you would like to share on other related impacts you perceive will unfold further down the track and/or may not be currently evident or present?

Much like the 2020 COVID-19 survey, respondents expressed their concern for the arts and university sectors, and cultural institutions. Specifically, four respondents mentioned the impact on funding for the arts sector, with one respondent stating:

My concerns are for the arts and creative sector more broadly, I think that it has been really hard hit and will need stronger advocacy going forward for funding not just for work for our members but also for institutions.

In terms of funding more generally, one respondent perceived that there will be “further potential job losses across many sectors” due to cost-cutting measures as a direct result of COVID-19. This, they argued, “will undoubtedly affect historians across sectors”. One other respondent had a similar response, stating that a “longer-term reduction in discretionary spending for potential clients” could result in “fewer projects to tender for”.

“I am concerned for funding in the arts sector. When the public purse is empty, the arts always suffers.”

Also comparable to the last survey were those members who expressed concern for future opportunities for historians, including emerging historians. For example, one respondent mentioned that there had been “shifts in the history field (and creation of history content) that could be attributed to the pandemic and might mean a loss of opportunity to historians”. This respondent used the example of some institutions creating content in-house, rather than out-sourcing to historians. Another respondent expressed concern for the impacts the pandemic would have on emerging historians, “who may not see the same opportunities and pursue work in other industries”. One respondent stated:

As cuts to the university sector continue, especially humanities... we’re going to have fewer historians, professional or otherwise, and thus a smaller pool of potential PHA members from which to recruit.

Further responses to this question were varied, with many expressing concerns about possible future impacts of the pandemic. One respondent expressed their concern for staff working from home, who may not always require a desk in the office, which “may impact the legal requirements of workplaces”. Another member described only having 2 weeks of face-to-face teaching experience at university level despite having taught four semesters since the beginning of 2020. Additionally, respondents noted the potential “loss of networking opportunities across various industries” and the ways in which “social isolation has changed

the way we interact with people”, and that they are now “much more cautious about indoor events and large crowds”.

One member mentioned their reliance on “digitisation services to access primary material” during the pandemic, and they hoped “this option will remain viable and supported by institutions” as they felt it “it greatly increases access and is also good for preservation”. In addition, a Western Australian member expressed concern for their access to government archives in the face of future potential lockdowns.

Lastly, two respondents reflected on potential positive impacts of the pandemic. Specifically, one respondent hoped for work/life balance flexibility, and another expressed the hope “that health and wellbeing will begin to take priority in many workplaces”.

Question 11 – Have you been able to maintain connections with fellow historians during the past 3 months?

Of the 46 respondents who answered this question, the majority (91.30%) indicated that they had been able to maintain connections with fellow historians during the past three months, whereas a small proportion (8.70%) felt that they had not. This is almost identical to the responses in 2020, when 91.48% of respondents indicated that they had been able to maintain connections, whereas 9.09% had not.

(Note: This question had only 46 respondents.)

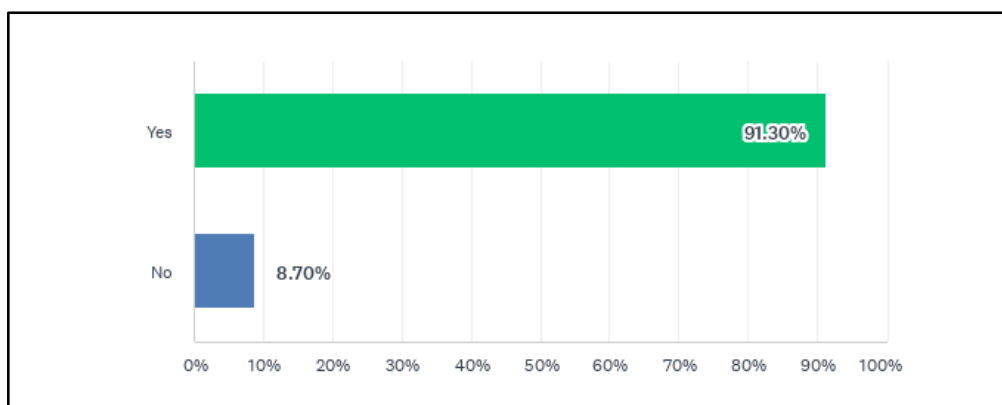


Figure 7: Responses to Question 11 – Have you been able to maintain connections with fellow historians during the past 3 months?

Question 12 – If you answered yes to the previous question, please indicate how you have been able to maintain connections.

Members indicated that they maintained connections with fellow historians in the following ways over the preceding three months:

- Via online events and, in some instances, in-person events;

- Through meetings, including Zoom and in-person meetings;
- Through social media and email;
- By attending webinars, conferences, seminars and online forums;
- Via networking opportunities;
- Through PHA and Australian Historical Association (AHA) events, and through the History Council of Victoria;
- Participating in committees and reading groups;
- By connecting with online communities;
- Via telephone;
- Via a University's Association;
- Through conversations about projects and working with colleagues;
- More recently, via site visits.

The responses to Question 12 were much the same as those received in the 2020 COVID-19 survey. The one difference in these responses, however, was that a small number of respondents in this most recent survey mentioned in-person interactions increasing.

(Note: This question had only 40 respondents.)

Question 13 – Do you have expertise in epidemics, pandemics, quarantine and/or public health policy areas?

The majority of respondents (93.62% or 44) indicated that they did not have expertise in epidemics, pandemic, quarantine and/or public health policy areas. Only three respondents indicated that they had experience in those areas.

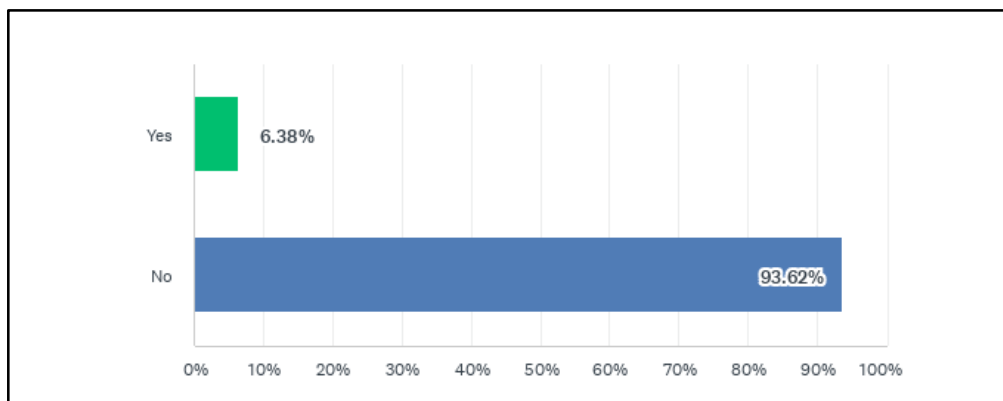


Figure 8: Responses to Question 13 – Do you have expertise in epidemics, pandemics, quarantine and/or public health policy areas?

Question 14 – If you answered yes to Q10 please provide a brief overview.

Of the three respondents that provided detailed and relevant answers to this question, only two directly indicated that they held experience in epidemics, pandemics, quarantine and/or

public health policy areas. One respondent stated that they taught epidemiological history many years ago, and the other respondent explained how their doctoral thesis focused on accidental child death on the Victorian goldfields during the nineteenth century, which subsequently “required a familiarity with the history of Victoria’s public health measures as they relate to how disease and injuries are affected by environmental changes”. The third respondent shared:

Hopefully as the impact of the pandemic reduces and new and interesting projects needing research are put out to tender there will be a reinvigoration of the industry. The demand for experienced practitioners might inspire them to continue in the field.

(Note: This question had only 8 respondents.)

Question 15 – Have you been commissioned to undertake any work or initiated your own projects in response to or on the current pandemic? e.g. journal article, book, community project, local history programs, academic research.

Just over three-quarters of respondents (76.60%) indicated that they had not been commissioned to undertake any work or initiated their own projects in response to, or on, the current pandemic. Eleven respondents detailed the varied projects they had been commissioned to undertake, or initiated themselves, in response to the pandemic. These projects included:

- A COVID-related collection project at a museum;
- A journal article on Australian universities during COVID;
- An oral history project with kids;
- An autobiography;
- A YouTube video;
- The Collecting the Curve project and related works;
- A chapter in a commissioned history and;
- An oral history interview regarding vaccination roll out.

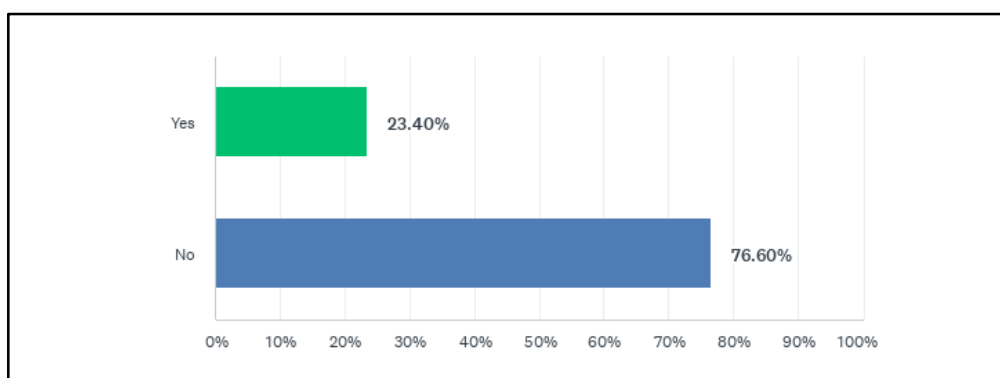


Figure 9: Responses to Question 15 – Have you been commissioned to undertake any work or initiated your own projects in response to or on the current pandemic? e.g. journal article, book, community project, local history programs, academic research.

Question 16 – Do you consider any of the changes you have needed to implement to adjust to COVID-19 in your own work practice or place of employment as changes that might endure or that have been valuable to reflect upon? This might include reduced travel, lower carbon footprint, new forms of communication/consultation, etc.

Two-thirds of respondents reflected on the online technologies that cemented themselves in their working lives during the COVID-19 pandemic, with many people feeling as though the trend would endure. Over half of these respondents emphasised the positive impacts of utilising online/virtual technologies, such as increased accessibility and capacity to attend events, especially for those living regionally or interstate, or those with a disability. In addition, the change also facilitated the ability to communicate with fellow historians, peers and clients when in-person contact was not possible. An increase in the utilisation of online/virtual technologies also meant less time spent travelling for some, with eight respondents specifically mentioning the positive environmental impact of their reduced carbon footprint. In addition, a Western Australian member mentioned the archives that prioritised digitising their material during the pandemic; a decision which they believed would have long-term benefits.

“Working from home has made my household more aware of our carbon footprint, and we have been more conscientious about reducing it. This has improved our quality of life on a number of levels.”

Three members, however, also reflected on the value of face-to-face contact, with one member mentioning that as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic we have “also learnt the less tangible value of face-to-face engagement”. Another respondent explained that “personal contact with fellow historians, clients and subjects in oral histories remains a valued and useful form of communication”. Additionally, a further respondent stated that “seeing people, particularly at the beginning of a project, should be in person if possible”, and that they have had to “advocate with clients about the advantage of doing oral history interviews in person, now that they know about Zoom, [as] many think it’s an equal alternative”.

Furthermore, two respondents reflected on working from home arrangements, with one respondent seeing working in such a way as now being more accepted, whilst another felt that “the amount of work that can be undertaken at home, uninterrupted” has now been acknowledged. In contrast, however, one member explained that workers “are now expected to be more available and integrated than before”.

“I think the ability to meet via Zoom has been a boon and will continue. Having a Zoom conference as an alternative to an in-person PHA conference every second year would help strengthen networks, while reducing our carbon footprint by reducing air travel.”

Lifestyle changes have been a positive outcome of the pandemic for some people, with one respondent now having more time to exercise, and another mentioning their more balanced lifestyle, with “more time for leisure, gardening, walking and meditation”.

On a less positive note, one member expressed concern that “perhaps reduced economic activity more widely will result in reduced demand for professional historians”.

Although not directly related to this question, an important point was made by one member that “any changes or work done especially for Covid-19 needs to be recognised for its historical significance and kept for posterity”.

(Note: This question had only 33 respondents.)

Question 17 – Do you have any suggestions as to how your state/territory PHA or Professional Historians Australia can assist you as a member at this time and in the future?

Members provided the following suggestions as to how their state associations or Professional Historians Australia could assist members at the current time and in the future:

PHA (NSW & ACT)

- “Support hybrid events if possible, or consider having some live and some virtual”
- “The information provided through various forms of communication has been a useful point of contact during the pandemic. Its constant use has been valuable in understanding the technology better and therefore getting more from it”

PHA (WA)

- Continue monthly bulletin with job vacancies

PHA (Vic & Tas)

- Regular communication
- Keeping the availability of online events such as lectures and seminars, or at least maintaining an online option
- “Providing and updating toolkits for historians working in post-pandemic circumstances will be valuable - including practical advice on changed responsibilities (eg. resources) by organisations and other contracting bodies”
- “Reminding the powers that be and have money to grant about the existence of professional historians”
- “When we get back to a biennial in-person conference it would be good to have an online short conference in between”
- “Advocacy at the state government level will be imperative in the short and longer term”
- “Lobbying for places like PROV and the SLV to be opened to professionals (if we have to lockdown again)... or for those institutions to have the capacity to copy/digitise records for free for professionals working to a deadline”
- “Continue to promote Zoom meetings, advertise work opportunities and check up on members in case they are struggling”
- “I particularly hanker for in-person meetings, conferences and interactions”
- “The drop-in sessions were a great idea”

As these suggestions demonstrate, members hope that regular communication, including regular job bulletins, from PHA and their state associations remains constant. In addition, maintaining online or hybrid events was important to many respondents, with one respondent also hoping for in-person events. Three PHA (Vic & Tas) members also mentioned advocacy or lobbying in one manner or another. For example, one respondent mentioned reminding those in charge of awarding grants and other funding about the existence of professional historians. Another respondent suggested advocating at the state-government level, and a third respondent proposed lobbying repositories to remain open for professionals if lockdowns occur in the future, or, alternatively, to ensure such institutions “have the capacity to copy/digitise records for free for professionals working to a deadline”.

(Note: This question had only 28 respondents.)

Question 18 – Have you donated to any fund set up to assist out-of-work historians or provided other support to historians, or are you aware of any such programs and support?

Twenty-seven respondents (60%) answered no to this question, as opposed to 19 respondents (42.22%) who answered yes. One respondent answered both yes and no.

(Note: This question had only 45 respondents.)

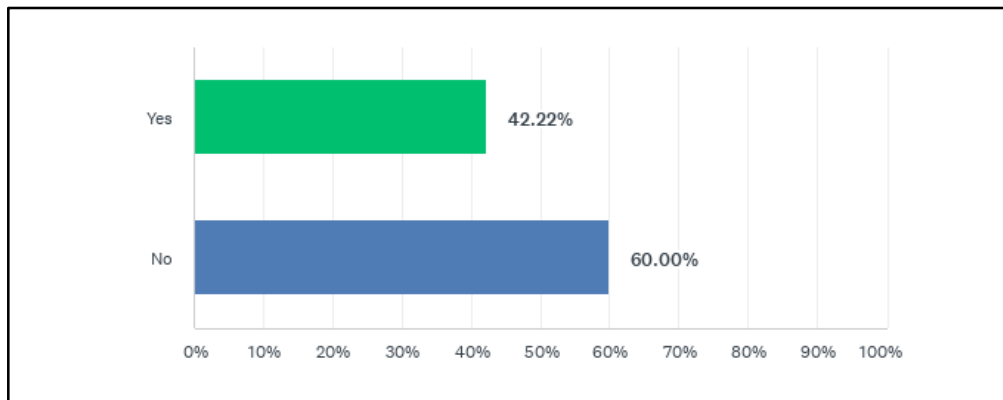


Figure 10: Responses to Question 18 – Have you donated to any fund set up to assist out-of-work historians or provided other support to historians, or are you aware of any such programs and support?

Question 19 – If yes to Q18 please specify (PHA respects your privacy if you would prefer not to specify).

Half the members who responded to this question had donated to the PHA (Vic & Tas) Pay it Forward program. Two respondents indicated that they were aware of programs, but had not donated, whereas another respondent “donated one day out of every fortnightly pay of the three big lockdowns to cover casual and contract staff”. One respondent indicated that they were a recipient of the Pay it Forward program, for which they were very appreciative as it

allowed them to pay for groceries for approximately six weeks. Four respondents indicated the question was not applicable or that they would prefer not to specify.

(Note: This question had only 19 respondents.)

Question 20 – Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey. Feel free to add additional comments here.

Nine of the 10 respondents completed the final question in the survey by either thanking PHA for organising the survey, and to keep up the great work. The tenth respondent commented on the impact of COVID-19 in Western Australia.

(Note: This question had only 10 respondents.)

Appendix 1 - PHA Member Survey on the Impact of COVID-19: A Report for Professional Historians Australia (August 2020)

PHA Member Survey on the Impact of COVID-19

A Report for Professional Historians Australia

Alannah Croom
August 2020

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Question 19 – If yes to Q18 please specify (PHA respects your privacy if you would prefer not to specify)..... 20

Question 20 – Thank for you taking the time to complete the survey. Feel free to add additional comments here 20

Executive Summary

This report presents data collected in the Professional Historians Australia (PHA) member survey on the impact of COVID-19. The survey was conducted from mid-June to mid-July 2020 and included 20 questions. 181 responses were received.

The survey provided insights into the difficulties many PHA members have faced as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Over 60% of the members surveyed felt that either their employment or income had been affected by COVID-19 and its impact on the Australian economy. The closure of repositories and libraries has had a significant impact on respondents, with many expressing how severely this has affected their research and ability to work. Many people were also fearful that such closures would continue. In addition, the postponement of projects/contracts, an inability to complete projects due to travel restrictions, and a scarcity of new projects to tender/apply for affected large proportions of members.

A significant proportion of respondents expressed concern about the future of the history and heritage sectors, as well as the university sector. Diminished funding opportunities and budget cuts, and an overall decrease in employment opportunities, were felt to be on the horizon, as respondents feared their work would be regarded as “non-essential”. One-third of respondents expressed some level of uncertainty about the future.

The survey highlighted the often-precarious nature of the profession, particularly for those who are employed on a contract or casual basis. It became evident that many members rely on employment external to the field of history as their main source of income, or to support their income from history-related work.

In terms of members’ needs, there were several suggestions provided. It was evident that advocacy and lobbying on behalf of the profession was important to members. Members felt that the PHA and the state/territory based Associations could advocate for the role of historians, history and historical thinking, for the role of humanities, and by lobbying for repositories to remain open, more accessible, and to increase digitisation efforts. Most respondents also hoped that the increased online presence and online professional development opportunities would continue.

In conclusion, it was clear that PHA members were appreciative of the work of PHA and the state/territory Associations during the pandemic. Specifically, respondents were grateful for the support, networking opportunities and increased online presence. Many PHA (Vic & Tas) members expressed their gratitude for the Association’s effort during the pandemic, including the extra support and provision of initiatives, including the *Pay it Forward* scheme, reduction in membership fees and the extension to the fee due date.

Background and Objectives

In response to the COVID-19 global pandemic, PHA conducted an online survey of its members. The primary aims of the survey were to understand how their members were tracking, how and to what degree their work had been affected by the pandemic, if any opportunities had arisen for members in response to the pandemic, and to gain some insights into whether the impacts resulting from the pandemic for professional historians are expected to be temporary, long-term or even permanent. The findings from the survey will be utilised by PHA and the state/territory Associations to advocate for historians and their place economically and socially in the community's recovery. In addition, the results will be drawn on to ascertain how best to address the needs of their members, and determine what assistance they can offer their members in the future, at both a local and national level.

Survey Method

The online survey was disseminated via email to all members of PHA through their relevant state/territory-based Association. The state/territory-based Associations of PHA include:

- Professional Historians Association (NSW & ACT);
- Professional Historians Association (Vic & Tas);
- Professional Historians Association (Qld);
- Professional Historians Association (SA);
- Professional Historians Association (WA);
- Professional Historians Association (NT).

In total, 181 members completed the survey.

Survey Results

Question 1 – To which PHA do you belong?

Of the 181 respondents, 44.20% belonged to PHA (Vic & Tas), 19.89% belonged to PHA (NSW & ACT), and 18.78% belonged to PHA (Qld). The smallest number of respondents belonged to PHA (NT), contributing only 1.66%.

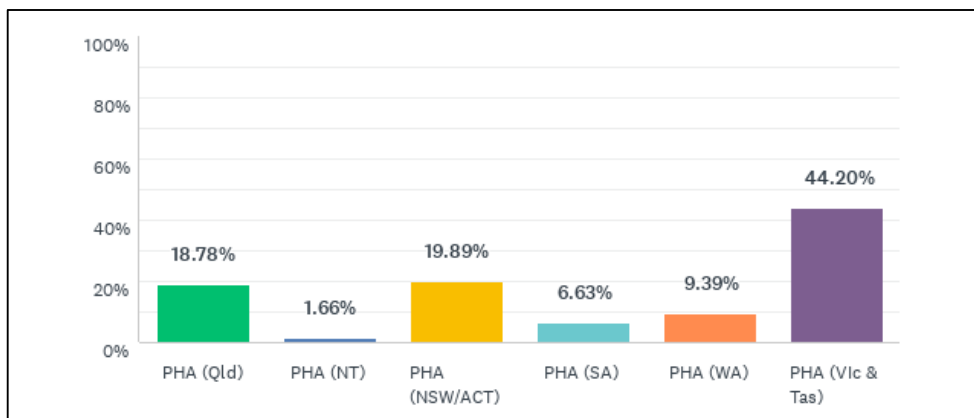


Figure 1: Responses to Question 1 – To which PHA do you belong?

Question 2 – How long have you been a PHA member?

Just under a third of the respondents (30.17%) indicated that they had been a PHA member for between 10-20 years, and almost a quarter of respondents (24.58%) had been members for more than 20 years. Those that had been members for 2-5 years (18.99%) represented a slightly higher percentage than those that had been members for 5-10 years (16.20%), whereas the smallest percentage consisted of those that had been members for less than 2 year (10.06%).

(Note: this question only received 179 responses).

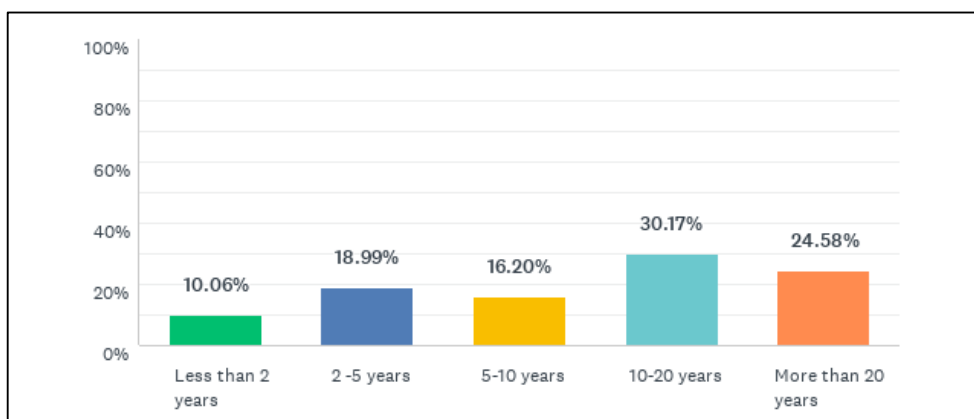


Figure 2: Responses to Question 2 – How long have you been a PHA member?

Question 3 – How would you describe your usual main source of income as a historian?

The main source of income for over 40% of respondents was through consultancy. This was followed by just over a fifth of respondents choosing the option “other”. Of those respondents who answered “other”, some of the answers given included retired, working in a part-time, casual or contract-based capacity, private or independent researchers/historians, oral historians, grant and post-doctoral funding, and employment outside the history profession. In addition, 14.36% of respondents received their main source of income as a historian as a heritage professional, followed by casual academics (9.94%), then public servants or municipal government employees (8.29%). The smallest percentage of respondents consisted of those who were casual staff members at a cultural institution (2.76%).

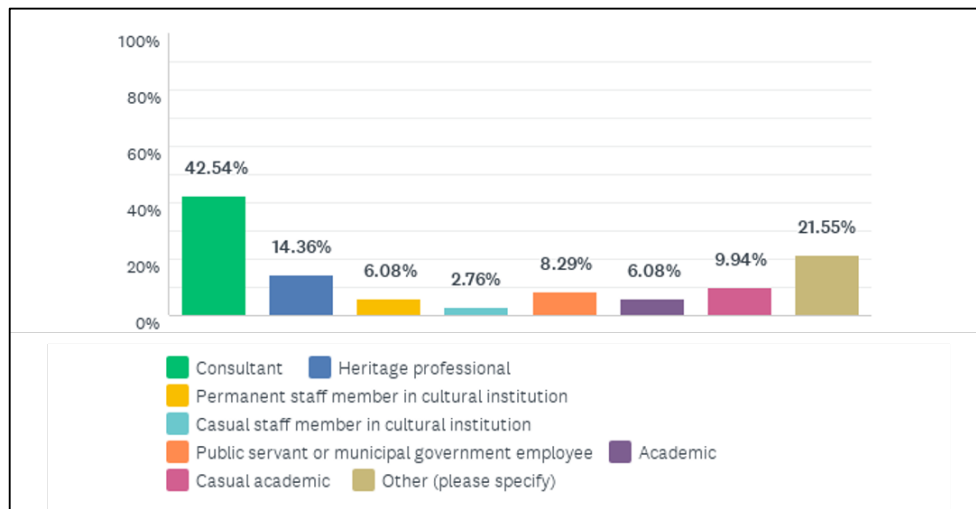


Figure 3: Responses to Question 3 – How would you describe your usual main source of income as a historian?

Question 4 – Do you consider that your employment or source of income has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the Australian economy?

111 of the 181 respondents (or 61.33%) felt as though their employment or source of income was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Whereas, by comparison, 73 respondents (or 40.33%) felt as though their employment or source of income was not affected.

In terms of a state/territory-based breakdown, between 66% and 71% of members of PHA (Vic & Tas), PHA (SA) and PHA (WA) stated that their employment or income had been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. 58% of PHA (Qld) members had been impacted, whereas PHA (NSW & ACT) had a 50-50 split. The three PHA (NT) members had not had their employment or income affected.

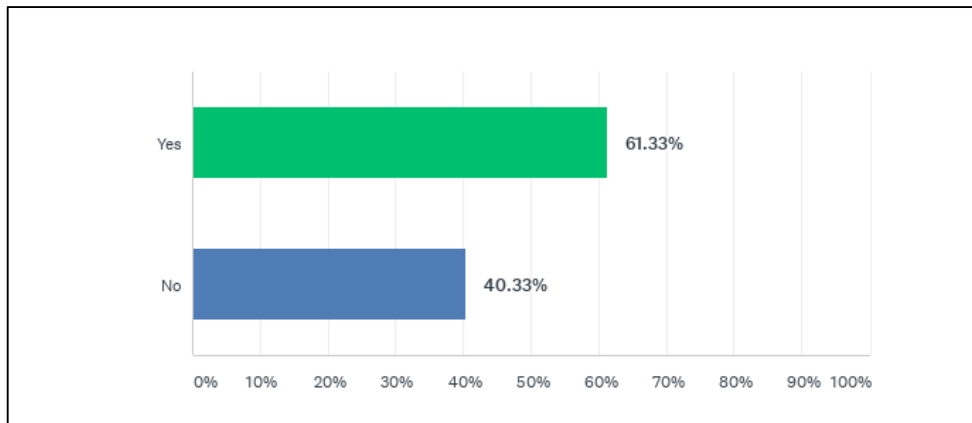


Figure 4: Responses to Question 4 – Do you consider that your employment or source of income has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the Australian economy?

Question 5 – If you answered yes to Q4, how have you been impacted?

As indicated in the table below, members were affected numerous ways during the COVID-19 pandemic. The inability to complete research due to the closure of libraries/repositories had the greatest impact on respondents (54.84%), followed by the postponement of projects/contracts (41.94%). The inability to complete projects due to travel restrictions (35.48%) and a scarcity of new projects to tender/apply for (34.68%) also impacted many respondents. Of the 20 respondents who provided “other” responses, the impacts described included “postponement of [an] overdue salary increase”, clients having less money to spend on services, “reduction in funding for projects”, “work hours reduced”, “a lack of employment opportunities in the sector”, and loss of overtime income. In addition, one respondent stated that despite their income not being affected, the pandemic had impacted on their ability to work in terms of difficulties in adjusting to working from home, lack of access to archives and libraries, and increased anxiety due to a “new work situation and uncertain future”. Other respondents mentioned that their work productivity had reduced “due to children being at home” or that the situation had caused them to feel “almost paralysed into inactivity and unable to concentrate as I should and normally can”. Alternatively, one respondent indicated that they had “an increase of work related to government initiatives to support COVID recovery.”

“...I expected to be relatively unaffected by [the] Covid situation but have found myself in the last few months almost paralysed into inactivity and unable to concentrate as I should and normally can.”

(Note: this question had only 124 respondents).

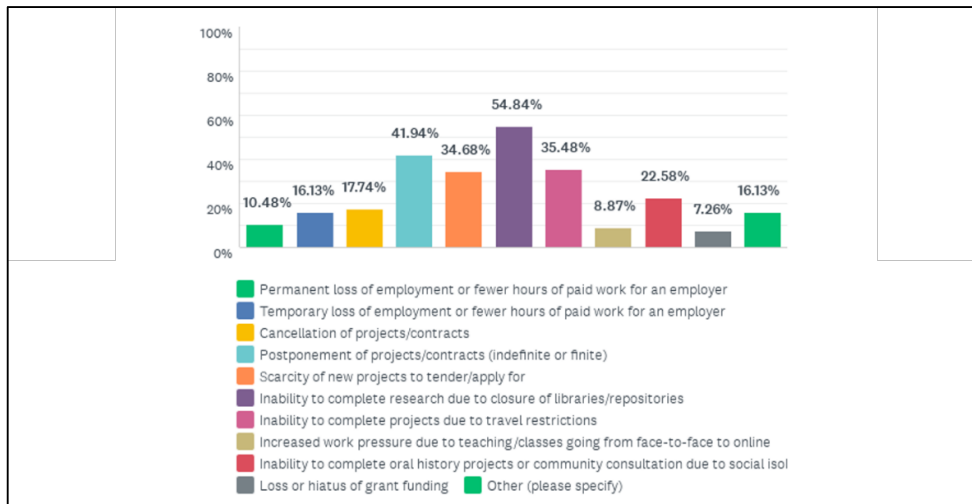


Figure 5: Responses to Question 5 – If you answered yes to Q4, how have you been impacted?

Question 6 – If the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted your income, have you been able to access other means of support?

46.28% of respondents who had been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic were able to access other means of support, as compared to one-third of respondents who were not. 23.97% of respondents chose “other” and some explanations included “continuation of share trading”, support by part-pensions and spouses, government support payments such as JobKeeper and JobSeeker, and living at home. It was also noted by one respondent that the pandemic has had a positive impact on their income, and two respondents suggested that their income would likely be impacted in the future.

(Note: this question had only 121 respondents).

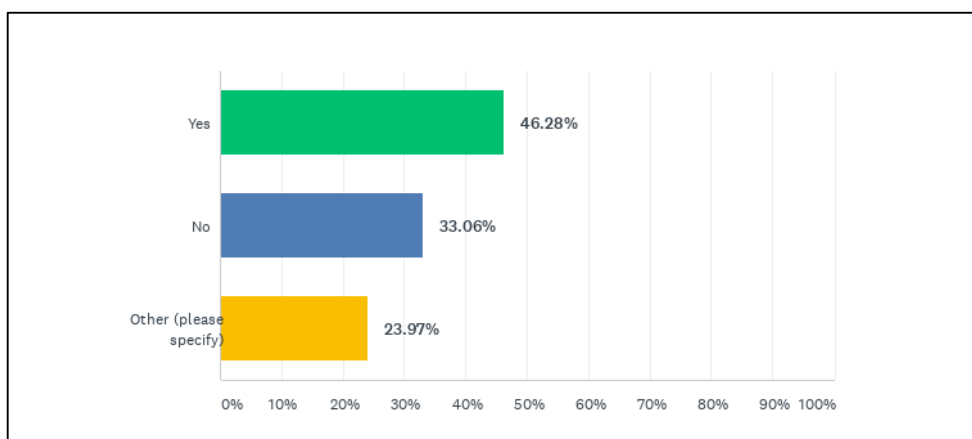


Figure 6: Responses to Question 6 – If the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted your income, have you been able to access other means of support?

Question 7 – If yes to Q6, what other means of support have you been able to access or what other response to your circumstances have you initiated? e.g. JobKeeper/JobSeeker or change of employment/career

Approximately one third of the 76 respondents had accessed JobKeeper as a means of support. Four respondents indicated that they had accessed JobSeeker, whilst others received alternative payments such as the age pension, a government supplement, and a “pre-retirement pension”. Three respondents indicated they were ineligible for JobKeeper or JobSeeker, whilst seven respondents had accessed their superannuation.

Some respondents also noted that they had accessed other state and federal government initiatives to support their business, such as the Victorian Government’s one-off Business Support Fund, and the Australian Taxation Office’s cash flow assistance for businesses. In addition, several respondents indicated that they were employed outside the history field in various capacities, whilst others were looking to “broaden [their] work base” or “looking and applying for other paid employment”. One respondent also indicated that they were pursuing a “change of career” by commencing a Masters of Teaching in 2021. Four respondents noted that they were relying on their partner’s income or family for support.

“I also work as an archaeologist and that side of my work has not decreased so has offset any decreased income from historical consultancy work.”

(Note: this question had only 76 respondents).

Question 8 – Has the COVID-19 crisis affected your family’s ability to work / maintain income in other ways (please indicate)?

Almost half of the respondents (47.66%) indicated that the COVID-19 crisis had meant that they had to share their home workspace with other family members. The categories “need to care for/home school children...” (14.84%), “need to care for other relatives...” (17.19%), and “partner’s loss of income/working hours” (15.63%) all impacted a similar number of respondents. Of the 44 respondents who provided “other” answers, a large proportion indicated that the question was not applicable to them, or that the COVID-19 crisis had not affected their family’s ability to work, or that they had to maintain income in other ways. However, a number of respondents indicated they were impacted by such things as:

- Restrictions on travel and public transport;
- Restrictions on access to research facilities, such as libraries and archives;
- Partner having to work further away;
- Requirement to set up home office at their own expense;
- Mental health;
- Caring responsibilities;
- Supporting children financially;
- Restrictions severely impacting income of other business.

(Note: this question had only 128 respondents).

Question 9 – Can you comment on other ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic has affected your day-to-day life and any projections about how you feel it will affect your work and work opportunities over the next year or two?

Overall, members indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on their day-to-day life. Understandably, several respondents indicated that they were now working from home, and that there was an increased reliability on digital platforms, and less face-to-face contact and/or networking opportunities.

In terms of negative effects, 36 respondents indicated that the inability to access material, particularly at archives and libraries, had severely impacted their ability to complete their research. Some respondents feared these restrictions would remain into the future, and continue to have a detrimental effect on their work. In addition, 61 respondents expressed some level of uncertainty about the future. Predominantly, these respondents indicated that they felt their work and work opportunities would be affected

“It has certainly increased my anxiety, and I am definitely concerned how the economic impact of COVID-19 will affect employment opportunities in the future. There certainly has not been much work around over the last couple of months at least, and I feel it won’t improve for at least a while yet.”

negatively in the future. 6 respondents indicated that their future career hopes and plans have, or may need to, change. Many felt that their work was extremely insecure and that opportunities in the field would be few and far between in the coming years, as well as highly competitive. It was widely felt that there would be budget cuts and less funding opportunities, as funding streams would likely be reduced or scratched altogether. Five respondents also noted the impact the pandemic was having on

the university sector and employment opportunities in that area. Another area of concern were restrictions on travel, which hindered the ability to do research and conduct in-person interviews, talks, fieldwork, and visit clients. Furthermore, eight respondents mentioned that they felt isolated due to the pandemic, and nine mentioned specifically the impact the pandemic has had on their mental health and wellbeing, particularly in terms of increasing anxiety and stress levels.

It is important to note that some respondents also mentioned the positive impacts of the pandemic, such as having more time for personal history projects, a greater number of online events, and that they enjoyed the flexibility of working from home. One respondent noted that they feel as though their “work may improve over the next year or two”, whilst another member responded that it compelled them “think about diversifying [their] income streams, so [they] now potentially have a higher income than [they] had expected before the pandemic”.

(Note: this question had only 149 respondents).

Question 10 – Do you have any thoughts you would like to share on other related impacts you perceive will unfold further down the track and/or that may not be currently evident or present?

The responses to question ten were similar to those in question nine. Approximately one-third of respondents expressed concern about the future of the history and heritage sectors, and the university sector. Namely, respondents were concerned about the prospect of less funding opportunities and budget cuts in the future, as work in the sector would be deemed “non-essential”. Consequently, it was felt there would be an overall decrease in employment opportunities, and three respondents expressed concerns that job opportunities that do arise will become overly competitive. One respondent noted that the plans they had made for their working life “had completely gone out the window”, whilst another respondent revealed that they will “have to permanently move out of the sector”.

“I am genuine[ly] worried about my future working in this field now.”

Again, physical access to repositories was highlighted by 12 respondents, with many concerned that these restrictions would continue in the future, resulting in difficulties to “undertak[ing] archival research” and writing “rich and interesting histor[ies]”. One respondent felt that PHA should advocate “to the GLAM sector and to all levels of government about the need to support and prioritise historians and other researchers access to collections for research before the general public”, as this would “ensure that the history sector’s economic needs are prioritized over recreational needs of the general public”.

Seven respondents mentioned digitisation within their responses. One member highlighted the need for further digitisation, whereas another noted that “funding for libraries and archives and their digitising programmes really paid off when working from home”. In addition, a further respondent was hopeful that increased digitisation would occur, and two others felt that it would occur.

Again, working from home and greater work flexibility, as well as a reliance on digital platforms, were seen as something that would endure into the future. Most respondents felt that this was a positive,

“The biggest impact for me, and others I know is the closure of repositories at a time when people seem to crave content. It highlights the need for digitisation and collection access projects...”

however, one respondent was concerned about our increased reliance on digital platforms as they felt they did not have the skills “even for search[ing] Trove”. In terms of PHA’s role in this area, one member suggested that “more opportunit[ies] to present our work online could be utilised to promote what

historians do and why it’s important”. Additionally, another respondent felt that “the future of PHA prof[essional] development is in virtual sessions” as it would “provide more opportunities to involve more geographically dispersed members”.

Not all members felt that the future was bleak for historians. One respondent expected “more work to be available as restrictions are lifted” and, similarly, another respondent felt that “the cultural heritage industry will pick up... to recover relatively unscathed compared to other industries”. In addition, one respondent was hopeful that more work would open up for historians around “the current Black Lives

Matter movement”. Similarly, a respondent felt that “people have seemed more interested in history than usual while in isolation”, which would perhaps have lasting impacts.

14 respondents (13.46%) did not identify any impacts that they perceived would unfold further down the track and/or that may not be currently evident or present, and three respondents indicated that the question was not applicable to them.

(Note: this question had only 104 respondents).

Question 11 – Have you been able to maintain connections with fellow historians during the past 3 months?

Of the 176 respondents, the majority (91.4%) indicated that they had been able to maintain connections with fellow historians during the past three months, whereas a small proportion (9.09%) felt that they had not.

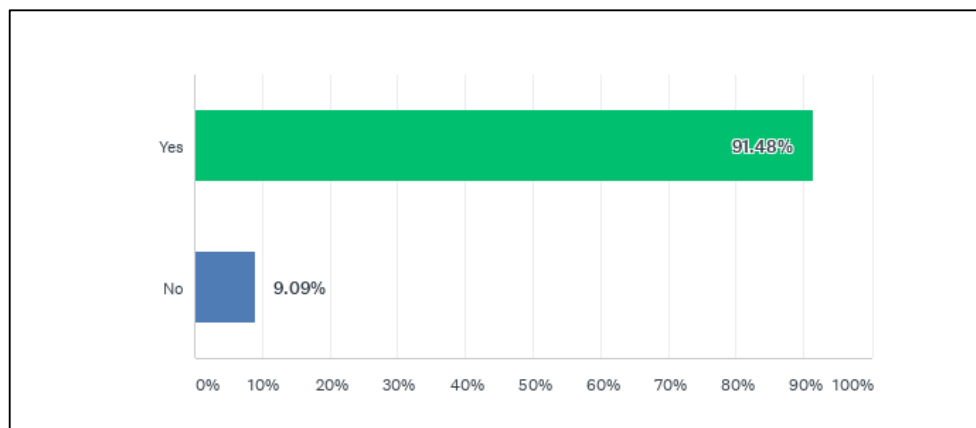


Figure 7: Responses to Question 11 – Have you been able to maintain connections with fellow historians during the past 3 months?

Question 12 – If you answered yes to the previous question, please indicate how you have been able to maintain connections.

Members indicated that they maintained connections with fellow historians in the following ways over the preceding three months:

- Via digital platforms such as email, social media and Zoom/Skype;
- Via telephone;
- Through online meetings;
- Through online webinars, seminars and courses;
- By accessing e-newsletters and podcasts;
- By contributing to online reading and writing groups;

- By sharing resources and engaging in collaborative online research;
- Going for walks and seeing others face-to-face, where possible;
- By accessing various PHA initiatives such as drop-in sessions, reading groups, the mentor program, online events etc.;
- Through their employment;
- Via involvement in committees, online groups and associations.

“PHA Zoom sessions. These have been great! As I live regionally, I often find it difficult to get to city events, and I’d encourage the PHA to keep up the Zoom events as another way to connect everyone post-COVID.”

(Note: this question had only 161 respondents).

Question 13 – Do you have expertise in epidemics, pandemics, quarantine and/or public health policy areas?

Over 90% of respondents indicated that they do not have expertise in epidemics, pandemics, quarantine and/or public health policy.

(Note: this question had only 176 respondents).

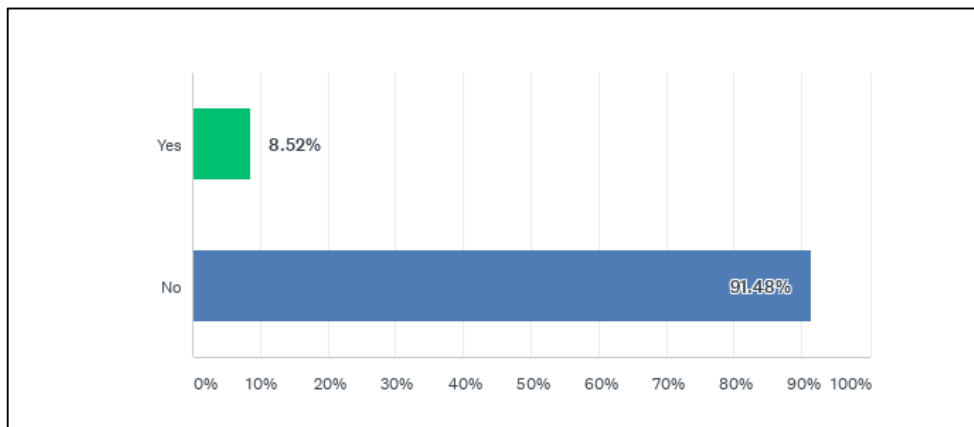


Figure 8: Responses to Question 13 – Do you have expertise in epidemics, pandemics, quarantine and/or public health policy areas?

Question 14 – If you answered yes to Q10 please provide a brief overview.

Although 33 respondents provided an answer to this question, only half provided a substantial or relevant answer. Three respondents indicated that they had expertise in the Spanish flu, whereas one other indicated that they had expertise in public health policy. Other areas of expertise included the “history of Public Health”, “quarantine and vaccinations in early South Australia”, “health legislation for the WA government”, and the “history of the Department of Health”.

Question 15 – Have you been commissioned to undertake any work or initiated your own projects in response to or on the current pandemic? e.g. journal article, book, community project, local history programs, academic research.

Just under a quarter of the 176 respondents indicated that they had not been commissioned to undertake work or initiated their own projects in response to, or on, the current pandemic. Of the 44 respondents who provided a further written response to this question, several mentioned work and projects that were not directly related to the current pandemic, and in some instances, it was unclear if their projects were directly related to the pandemic.

Of those who indicated that they had undertaken work or projects that were directly related to the pandemic (either paid or unpaid), the activities mentioned included journaling, writing blog posts, articles, and book chapters, “recording soundscapes”, giving online talks and lectures, editing and research, conducting a session for schools on “Diseases of the Past”, COVID related collecting, and “writing short histories of pandemics”. Three respondents indicated that they had hopes of undertaking work in response to, or on, the current pandemic in the future.

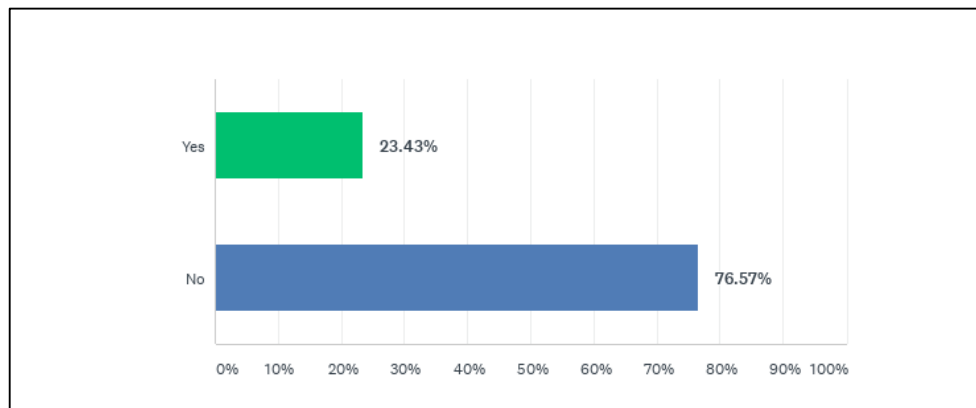


Figure 9: Responses to Question 15 – Have you been commissioned to undertake any work or initiated your own projects in response to or on the current pandemic? e.g. journal article, book, community project, local history programs, academic research.

Question 16 – Do you consider any of the changes you have needed to implement to adjust to COVID-19 in your own work practice or place of employment as changes that might endure or that have been valuable to reflect upon? This might include reduced travel, lower carbon footprint, new forms of communication/consultation, etc.

Of the 145 respondents, 36 reflected on the changes to their work situation and the increase in people working from home. 22 of the 36 respondents stated that the trend to work from home would, or they hoped it would, endure in the future. Three respondents felt that working from home was now more accepted, and another that there was now “more opportunity to work remotely”. Additionally, a further respondent felt that working from home was now the norm, and “not the pariah it once was”.

In general, respondents felt that working from home was a positive change. Firstly, it resulted in reduced travel costs and time, which, in turn, resulted in a lower carbon footprint and benefited the environment. Working from home also allowed for greater flexibility, and increased productivity and efficiency. One

respondent saw that their collections staff were getting much more work done from home. Another respondent felt that working from home had, in fact, “brought [their] team closer together”. Despite these positives, one member stated that they “would prefer a mix of some work from home and some time in the office” post-pandemic.

“These changes of course lead to a lower carbon footprint but also more time, which can be used for work, walking and relaxation, or whatever else you want/need to do.”

In addition, 86 of the 145 respondents reflected on the changes in communication methods and the increased use of digital platforms, such as Zoom. 39 of the 86 of the respondents felt that these changes would endure into the future and, again, this was seen in a positive rather than negative light. At least 12 respondents reflected on the increased opportunities the wider use of digital platforms had afforded them, or will afford others, particularly those living in regional areas, or those residing in other

states or countries from where the event is being held. 3 respondents noted how convenient online communication and events were, and others were surprised how “effective” and “engaging” online communication can be. Much like the increase to people working from home, respondents felt that the increased use of digital platforms saved “travel time and money” and was “preferable for busy people”. It also benefited the environment. Another respondent reflected on the “rapid improvements in technology” that had occurred as a result of greater online communication, whereas others commented on the “greater familiarities with technologies”, which was beneficial in many ways including “a greater client willingness to engage digitally” and “a better connection globally”. Another member suggested that the “higher reliance and familiarity on technology.... enables a better life/work balance”. Furthermore, two respondents suggested that they hoped a blend of online and in-person events would continue in the future

In addition, five respondents felt that conducting oral histories and interviews online would endure into the future. One respondent noted the “enhanced opportunities for using technology in oral history” whereas another respondent stated that “Zoom oral history interviews (with distant or interstate interviewees) appear far more feasible”. In contrast, one respondent felt that, in their opinion, it was “is not possible to conduct good quality oral history interviews on Zoom”, but they would continue to use Zoom for administrative meetings and the like.

“Online communication with Zoom and similar software is expected to remain a strong feature of the workplace. Reduced commutes through working virtually is also expected to be a feature of my future workplace. Attending conferences online will also minimize the need to travel. Any benefit this has for the environment will be fantastic.”

In terms of further negatives, two respondents were concerned that they would not have the skills to adapt to the new forms of communication and digital platforms. A further two respondents felt that Zoom meetings were not “a satisfactory alternative”, or as effective, as face-to-face-meetings. In addition, one respondent stated how wearying online meetings can be “if you have many of them”, and a

second asserted that “personal connection is vital” and that they found videoconferencing “soulless and unpleasant”.

As indicated, both the increase to people working from home and the changes in communication, which prompted an increased use of digital platforms, had resulted in a reduction in travel. Members reflected on the positives of travelling less, such as the benefits to the environment and the lowering of their carbon footprint. In addition, reduced travel meant reduced travel costs and more time to be more productive, or do other activities. In terms of the negatives, 8 respondents felt that the inability to travel had hindered their ability to visit repositories, conduct research or participate in face-to-face consultation and fieldwork.

In terms of other changes brought on by the pandemic, one respondent reflected on the increase in plastic waste, particularly due to the increase in takeaway coffees and food. In addition, three respondents reflected on digitisation; two noted the increase in digitised material and another stated that “the value of having historical records digitised and on line has been proven, well and truly”.

Lastly, it should be noted that approximately 13% of people felt as though the changes they had needed to implement to adjust to COVID-19 would not endure post-pandemic, or that any changes were not worth reflecting upon. A small proportion of people also noted that they had not made any changes due to the pandemic.

(Note: this question had only 145 respondents).

Question 17 – Do you have any suggestions as to how your state/territory PHA or Professional Historians Australia can assist you as a member at this time and in the future?

15 respondents felt that PHA and/or their relevant state/territory PHA could assist members by advocating or lobbying on their behalf. Grouped by state or territory, some of the key areas where members felt advocacy/lobbying efforts could be focused, included:

PHA (Qld)

- Advocating for the Queensland State Archives (QSA) to open as soon as possible;
- Advocating for repositories “to increase digitisation efforts and/or not charge for digitisation orders (e.g. QSA & NAA)” and advocating for libraries and archives to enable “special (Members only) access to archival resources they need to research”;
- “[F]ighting budget cuts to humanities”;
- Increased advocacy in general.

PHA (NSW & ACT)

- Advocating “about the importance of humanities”;
- “Have a louder voice in public discourse about the role of history and historical thinking in shaping responses to crises and other wicked policy problems.”
- Increased advocacy in general.

PHA (SA)

- “...lobbying for Jobseeker/keeper assistance”;
- “Promoting value of history in studying and dealing with such pandemics/outbreaks would help members.”

PHA (WA)

- Lobbying various “repositories to increase and broaden digitisation of materials and make available online”.

PHA (Vic & Tas)

- “Lobbying within the tertiary sector and at a government level to provide work opportunities and security for casuals”;
- Advocating for repositories to remain open and easily accessible;
- Advocating for “inclusion in arts and culture funding programs as a creative industry”;
- Advocating for “more recognition of history and historians”, “for the value of history and the role of professional historians” and “for the importance of historians and pushing public awareness of their skills, so that historians are valued by universities, governments, and employers, as well as the broader public, especially as the post-COVID world is constructed”.

(Note: No PHA (NT) members provided suggestions).

In addition, one PHA (Vic & Tas) respondent felt that it was important to have a “coordinated national response” when advocating with the government, rather than “each state PHA fending for itself”.

“Think about ways to work with all state PHAs to share knowledge and training on digital platforms. Great way to connect and see [what] we are all doing.”

Approximately 14 respondents felt that the PHA and/or their relevant state/territory Associations could assist their members by continuing to maintain their support and services. In general, respondents supported the increased online presence, and online events and professional development opportunities, and hoped they would continue in the future. For example, two PHA (Qld) members hoped their association would continue to “reach out to members” and provide support and opportunities for PHA members to keep in contact. PHA (NSW & ACT) members hoped that their association would continue to provide “professional networking through social media, email and website”, “Zoom

options for meetings” and “continue to run sessions via Zoom... especially for professional development”. Two PHA (Vic & Tas) members hoped that PHA and their state-based Association would continue to source and advertise new employment opportunities, including those “that may not be considered traditional”. Other PHA (Vic & Tas) members hoped the Association would “continue to offer the occasional webinar”, continue to provide “ongoing support and networks” and “employment and professional development options”, and continue to “have an online presence so members who do not live in city centres can attend events and have a connection with other members.”

Other members indicated that they would like more opportunities for professional development, or professional development opportunities on specific topics. For example, one PHA (NSW & ACT) member felt that “more direct PD would... be useful in the future”. A PHA (Qld) member wanted more “Zoom seminars or workshops”, and a PHA (SA) member indicated that they would like “more PD sessions on use of technology and sourcing digital records”. Two PHA (Qld) members hoped to have access to professional development opportunities in the areas of “digital presentations and creating content for the web” and “how to run a successful small business”. Additionally, two PHA (Vic & Tas) members felt that professional development sessions in archival and transferable skills were important.

There were also members who hoped to receive assistance, increased support or advice in particular areas. PHA (Qld) members wanted advice for negotiating “work contracts and work opportunities” and the for “how to access some institutions that do not allow historians that are no longer attached to academic institutions access their collections”. Other PHA (Qld) members wanted further “outreach by newsletters”, mentoring for web tools, or hoped for assistance with “online communication and collaboration”. In addition, a further PHA (Qld) member hoped their association would facilitate “discussions on new forms of communication for members and professional issues that may arise”, for example in Zoom or Google Meet. A PHA (NSW & ACT) member wanted “provision of access to zoom pro facilities” and an option to pay fees in installments. A second PHA (NSW & ACT) member suggested that their Association could encourage members who needed support to contact them. Furthermore, a PHA (SA) member wanted “increased interaction with other members, especially newer members”, and a PHA (WA) member wanted to see “discussions on current issues”. PHA (Vic & Tas) members wanted “a collection of work around historians view of a pandemic would give a sense that we can learn from the past and people have lived through times like these” and help “with paid employment opportunities”. Both a PHA (Qld) and a PHA (Vic & Tas) member hoped that their Associations could facilitate a way for their members to share their digital collections/electronic resources with each other. Lastly, a PHA (Qld) member suggested that the PHA and the state/territory based Associations should think about ways to work together “to share knowledge and training on digital platforms”.

“PHA Vic & Tas has been offering some great online events and ways of staying connected. It would be fantastic to see that expanded to PHA events across Australia, which could be offered either solely online or both in-person and online - to allow more people to attend and get involved remotely.”

It also must be emphasized that over a quarter of the 110 respondents praised the PHA and/or their state/territory Association for their efforts and support during the pandemic. 17 of the 29 respondents who offered praise, commended PHA (Vic & Tas) specifically for their work and support for their members during the pandemic.

(Note: this question had only 110 respondents).

Question 18 – Have you donated to any fund set up to assist out-of-work historians or provided other support to historians, or are you aware of any such programs and support?

123 (70.69%) of 174 of respondents answered no to this question, whereas 51 (29.31%) answered yes.

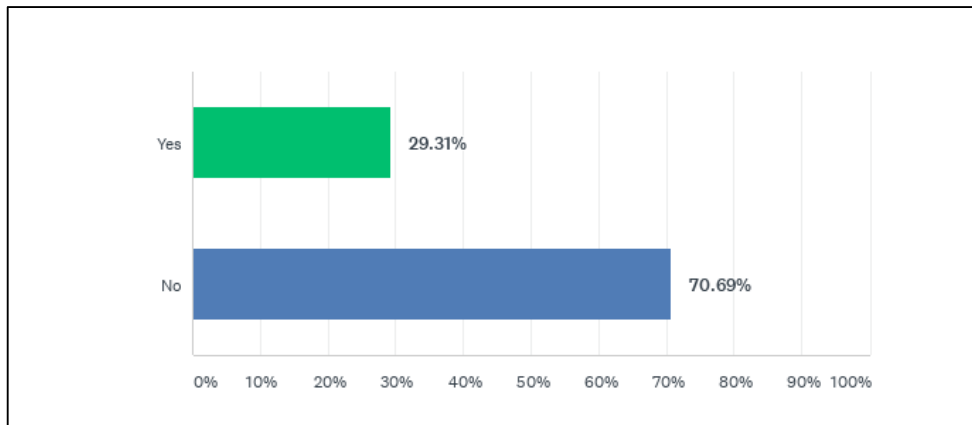


Figure 10: Responses to Question 18 – Have you donated to any fund set up to assist out-of-work historians or provided other support to historians, or are you aware of any such programs and support?

Question 19 – If yes to Q18 please specify (PHA respects your privacy if you would prefer not to specify).

Eight respondents indicated they were aware of such programs and support, however they were unable to assist financially. 14 respondents indicated they were aware of such programs, particularly the PHA (Vic & Tas) *Pay it Forward* scheme, but they did not stipulate whether they had contributed financially to such programs or not. Seven respondents indicated that they plan to contribute financially to programs in the future.

Five respondents noted that they had provided financial support to funds, whereas two had provided non-financial support.

In addition, there were three respondents who were unaware of such programs for historians, only those for “casual staff at universities”, and “practicing artists and other cultural workers”. 17 of the 63 respondents answered the question with “no” or not applicable.

Question 20 – Thank for you taking the time to complete the survey. Feel free to add additional comments here

Over 45% of the 57 respondents expressed their thanks to PHA and the state/territory Associations for conducting the survey and for supporting and communicating with their members during the pandemic.

16 respondents took the opportunity to once again reflect on the myriad of ways the pandemic has, or has not, impacted them. For example, one respondent noted the constraints a reduced income has had on their plans to “travel for research” and to “talk face-to-face to interested history groups”. Another respondent noted that the only significant impact they had experienced due to the pandemic was a “three-month delay in payment”. In addition, one member stated that “the commentary on history and its value in the media and by the government – while not really surprising – has been demoralizing and exceptionally challenging to deal with on top of job losses and insecure income.”

“I think the shutdown has provided opportunities to think, and escape the endless crush. I don’t think we should be hurrying out to return to old ways, but need to spend as much time as we can thinking and strategizing so that we can be more active in making the future – especially a future that would better value history and historians than we have been used to.”

Despite these disheartening impacts, there were other members who indicated that they were not greatly affected in terms of employment or income, or that the pandemic had afforded them the time to focus on other projects, or ponder their goals for the future.

Lastly, one member felt that the “national body needs to be more visible/proactive” and that “a national response which brings together (or makes us aware) of what individual PHAs are doing” would be useful.