The Australian Generations Oral History Project is a nationwide project led by historians at Monash and La Trobe Universities in partnership with the National Library of Australia and ABC Radio National. The project recorded the life stories of 300 Australian residents born between 1920-1989 in every state and territory. The interviews explore Australian life and society across time and illuminate generational change. Project researchers and radio producers are now using this 1220 hour-long collection to investigate 20th and 21st century history and memory. Ethical decision-making has informed each step of the project’s processes and workflow. Our decisions about selecting interviewees, inviting them to participate, commissioning interviews, recording and documenting interviews, following up with interviewees, storing interview materials in a research database, using the interviews in research, archiving the interview material at the National Library, and whether and how interviews are made available are all shaped by the ethical, archival and intellectual decisions that impact how people discuss these issues and the changing social attitudes that influence the way people understand the people recorded. The project’s Rights form is a modified version of the National Library’s standard version of the National Library’s standard. It contains an additional anonymization option. It stipulates conditions of use by the general public, and some people select restrictions—such as making their material available only if their written permission is sought each time someone wishes to access their interview—because the National Library does not offer an anonymization option.

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