



**Labour History Society
(South Australia)**

You are invited to the Labour History Society (SA) meeting on Sunday 21 August 2022
At the Box Factory, Regent Street South CBD commencing at 2.00 pm. The guest speaker
will be Dr Paul Sendziuk on the Subject of:

When Factories Close: General Motors-Holden Workers' Memories of Place and Community

In post-war Australia, General Motors-Holden and its factories were seen as symbols of progress, with newspapers and company literature emphasising the sheer size of the built structures (and the enormous machinery inside them), the speed of production lines and the massive outputs they generated. Usually located in industrialised, working-class suburbs, factories were built with utility, not aesthetics, in mind for work that was often dirty, repetitive, noisy, and dangerous. Far from being places of untold Dickensian horrors, however, oral histories reveal how Holden's workers inhabited these spaces and made them their own, creating socially constructed workplaces with which they forged deep connections that continued to resonate beyond their employment. This paper focuses on GMH's long-lasting factory at Woodville (Adelaide) and a group of workers who were employed there for various periods, doing a variety of jobs, between 1945 and 1990. Their memories challenge traditional impressions of factory life, and reveal deeply felt, if complicated, attachments to place that have outlasted the physical structures of the factory itself. Presented by Paul Sendziuk, the paper is co-authored by **Carolyn Collins**.

Brief biographies

Paul Sendziuk is an Associate Professor in the Department of History at the University of Adelaide. He is an experienced oral historian, with expertise in the histories of migration, labour, disease and public health. He is currently co-writing a social history of General Motors-Holden, focusing on factory workers and workplace culture. His previous books include *Learning to Trust: Australian Responses to AIDS*, *A History of South Australia* (with Robert Foster), and *In the Eye of the Storm: Volunteers and Australia's Response to the HIV/AIDS Crisis* (with Robert Reynolds and Shirleene Robinson).

Carolyn Collins is a Research Fellow in the Department of History at the University of Adelaide. She is currently employed on the 'Social Histories of Holden' project. Her publications include *Trailblazers: 100 Inspiring South Australian Women* (2019) and *Save Our Sons: Women, Dissent and Conscription during the Vietnam War* (2021).