

Chris SELBY SMITH
July 1942 - September 2007



Phillip McKenzie and Gerald Burke

Chris Selby Smith died suddenly on 15 September. He had been a major contributor to research on the economics of education, and public policy more generally, for almost 40 years. Chris was a founding director of the Monash University-ACER Centre for the Economics of Education and Training (CEET) in 1992 and played a substantial role in CEET's operations.

Dr Hugh Jackson, a close friend of Chris from his undergraduate days, gave the eulogy at his funeral on 24 September. Hugh touched a chord with many in the large congregation when, after affectionately ranging over Chris's many achievements and activities, he simply asked – "*was there anything that Chris was not interested in?*"

Those who met Chris could not help but be swept along by his energy and enthusiasm for all that was going on in the world. Even the briefest of conversations was likely to canvass the latest ministerial announcements, developments in government departments, opera, early results from a new survey, university politics, Italian history, plans for a new book, and Melbourne's need for a new full forward. Intertwined with all this, Chris would have asked gentle but insightful questions about one's own work, views on policy issues, and holiday plans. More often than not the conversation would conclude with an agreement on the next steps in some joint endeavour, stimulated by the flow of the exchange. You would leave the conversation feeling both better informed and that something constructive had been achieved. Because he engaged with others so broadly and genuinely, he made people feel valued and that their views mattered.

Early Career 1961-1975

Chris was an outstanding student. He was Dux of Scotch College in Melbourne in 1959 and School Captain in 1960, as well as a member of the first cricket and football teams. He graduated with a First Class Honours Degree in Economics from the University of Melbourne in 1964, along the way picking up an Exhibition in Economic History I (1961), the Wyselaski Prize (1963), and the Dwight Prize (1964). He was the 1965 Rhodes Scholar for Victoria at Oxford [Magdalen College].

His D Phil thesis was completed in 1968 under the supervision of Professor John Vaizey, a giant of the economics of education. The thesis was published as the *The Costs of Further Education: A British Analysis* (Pergamon, 1970). This was an ambitious and wide-ranging analysis of the purposes, structure, costs and benefits (to individuals, employers and society) of the further education sector in Britain. The book was critical of the organization of further education, but in his usual manner Chris made it clear that he was "far from critical of those who labour devotedly within it". Chris concluded by proposing a radical transformation of further education which he argued "could help greatly in the continuous struggle to achieve socially desirable goals. This is an important point, which it is dangerous to neglect, for education is a key instrument for the redistribution through time of income, prestige, wealth and power".

His doctoral work embodied the hallmarks of his later research: meticulous attention to detail and documentation of method; a concern with the purposes of education and its contribution to social change; and clear, expressive writing intended for policymakers as well as researchers.

Following Oxford Chris held an academic position at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in Toronto before working at the Education Research Unit in the Australian National University (1969-75). While at the ANU he co-edited with Grant Harman, *Readings in the Economics and Politics of Australian Education* (Pergamon, 1976), a book that soon became a fixture on university reading lists. Its 23 contributions discussed the governance of Australian education, the role of pressure groups, state aid for non-government schools, the politics of educational institutions, financing of education, resource allocation, and teacher supply and demand. The authors included already well-established scholars such as Peter Karmel and Russell Matthews, as well as those who would later become prominent, such as Philip Hughes and Andy Spaul. The book represented a substantial broadening of the range of disciplinary perspectives involved in educational research, as well as opening up new questions in Australian economic and political debate. It was a best-seller and undoubtedly stimulated much further research and policy analysis.

Chris's penchant for modest titles was again evident in his major ANU work *The Costs of Post-Secondary Education: an Australian study* (Macmillan, 1975). As with his British study, this research analysed much more than education costs, and was a detailed cost-benefit analysis of different forms of tertiary education in Australia leading to a set of proposals for reform. It drew together for the first time a substantial body of data on Australian costs and earnings from published and unpublished sources. It grounded the detailed empirical analysis in a rigorous conceptual framework informed by an up-to-date review of national and international research. Chris was a natural teacher, and the careful organisation of this book showcased his teaching gifts.

The Public Service 1975-1988

In 1975 Chris joined the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. In a strong endorsement of his intellectual and organisational abilities, in 1976 he was appointed Secretary of the Commonwealth Committee of Inquiry into Education and Training. The Inquiry, which was chaired by Sir Bruce Williams, was concerned with the provision of education facilities and services, and also with the relationships between education, training and the labour market. It was asked to provide advice on possible developments to the year 2000 and was a cooperative inquiry with the States.

This was a landmark inquiry that reported through three substantial volumes published in 1979. Its 116 recommendations covered school-to-work transition, teacher education, assessment of student performance in schools, broadening of educational opportunities, recognition of prior learning and credit transfer, entry to higher education and course provision, trades training, long-term planning and financing, the role of Commonwealth and State government agencies, and the need to strengthen research and development on education and labour market development. As Secretary, Chris was responsible for oversight of much of the research as well as commissioning a wide range of specialist inputs.

Following conclusion of the inquiry Chris was then asked to lead the Commonwealth's response to the recommendations. His time in the federal public service also included chairing a review of student assistance policies and programs, contributing to the taskforce on migrant services and an evaluative study of Indigenous health programs. From 1980 to 1984 Chris was promoted to First Assistant Secretary in the Commonwealth Department of Health, and from 1984 to 1988 he was Senior Assistant Commissioner on the Public Service Board. His rich and varied experience in government, along with his substantial academic strengths, provided a very solid foundation for his next career move, taking up a professorial position in Management in the Faculty of Business and Economics at Monash University.

Monash University 1988-2005

Chris came to Monash a second time in 1988 to the Public Sector Management Institute—he had been a senior teaching fellow in the mid-1960s. Chris made major contributions to the revision of the health administration stream in the Monash MBA, and the establishment of the National Centre for Health Program Evaluation in 1990. Chris was a Director from 1990 to 1994

From this time Chris developed a particular interest in international work, especially in health policy in developing countries, and undertook work for international agencies, including OECD and WHO.; He also taught in the SDA program at Bocconi University in Milan on a sessional basis for a number of years.

In 1992 Chris joined with colleagues in the Monash Faculty of Education and Department of Economics and the Australian Council of Education Research to found the Monash University-ACER Centre for the

Economics of Education (CEET). Chris was heavily involved in all aspects of CEET's work. In 1993 the newly established Australian National Training Authority commissioned CEET to conduct the first major review of the economics of VET in Australia. Chris played a major role in that review, as well as in securing and implementing CEET's later work under the three triennia of the ANTA National Key VET Research Centre program. Chris worked with CEET on a half time basis from 1995 though he retained a fractional appointment in the Department of Management at Clayton until his retirement.

The program as the national research centre required that CEET to build partnerships with VET practitioners and policymakers, and with other researchers. Chris took the lead in hundreds of consultations, briefings and seminars with people in the VET sector and beyond, and took great delight in visiting VET providers and stakeholders around the country and canvassing their concerns and suggestions for research. His easy, friendly manner helped him to establish a very wide range of productive collegial relationships. Within CEET Chris could be firm in his views but goodwill prevailed and strengthened over the years of very productive partnerships.

Chris became well known for his work on the implementation of user choice in the VET sector, He also led a strong program of research on one of his enduring concerns, how to better connect research and decision making in public policy including in education

One indicator of his impact on CEET is that from 1992 to his retirement in 2005 he either authored or co-authored around 20 (one-third) of CEET's Working Papers produced in that time. He was also involved in the editing of many of CEET publications, most notably in *The Economics of Education and Training: CEET's Stocktake* (NCVER 2001) which pulled together the centre's ideas developed over the previous decade. Without the patience and persistence displayed by Chris some of these volumes may never have been published. For Chris, though, the job was not finished when the book was back from the printers – he then worked tirelessly to ensure that the research was widely disseminated and used.

His research was characterised by a strong focus on how economic analysis could contribute to improved outcomes in education, health and social policy more generally.

After his retirement from Monash Chris maintained his research interests including as adjunct Professor of Management in the Faculty of Business at Charles Sturt University; he gave greater focus to his many interests including fishing in Tasmania and in Chile, walking, guiding at the MCG, and singing in a community choir. Most recently, there was a trip to Antarctica and a return to Oxford for a Magdalen gaudy.

Chris's untimely death prompted a large number of condolences from around Australia and overseas. Dr Rupert Maclean (Director, UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, in Bonn) spoke for many when he wrote:

"I am both shocked and greatly saddened to hear about the death of Chris, at such a young age. I knew Chris well, both as a highly influential researcher and academic, and as a wonderfully generous, friendly and likeable person. On behalf of myself and colleagues the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre in Bonn, I convey our deepest sympathy to Joy and family, and to all in CEET where Chris has worked so effectively and well over many years."

Chris researched the economics of education for nearly 40 years. His was a major contribution. His publications include over 30 books, 20 monographs, 30 articles in refereed journals and 60 book chapters (a select bibliography is included as an Appendix)..

Chris will be greatly missed as a warm, loyal and enthusiastic colleague and a good friend to us all. Hugh Jackson concluded his eulogy by observing that Chris was *'both clever and good'*. We can think of no better way to conclude our own tribute.

Chris Selby Smith Selected Works

Chris authored or co-authored over 30 books, 20 monographs, 30 articles in refereed journals and 60 book chapters. In addition, he wrote many papers on behalf of the Commonwealth government. The following is a selection of his main publications¹.

Books and Monographs

- Concerning the Growth of Provincial Expenditure on Education in Ontario, 1938-66*, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto, 1969 (with M.L. Skolnik).
- The Costs of Further Education: A British Analysis*, Pergamon Press, Oxford, 1970.
- The Costs of Post-Secondary Education: An Australian Study*, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1975.
- Social Science Perspectives on Australian Education*, Macmillan, Melbourne 1973 (with R. Browne, R. Goodman, G. Harman and W. Simpkins).
- Regional Colleges: Study of Non-Metropolitan Colleges of Advanced Education in Australia*, Education Research Unit, Occasional Report No. 4, 3 Volumes, 1975, with D.S. Anderson, K.J. Batt, D.G. Beswick and G.S. Harman.
- Inventory of National Health Labour Force Research 1980-1991*, with D. Davis, A. Fletcher, C. Fox, L. Ridoutt and J. Selby Smith, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1992.
- Australian Higher Education: Problems of a Developing System*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1972. (edited with G.S. Harman)
- Readings in the Economics and Politics of Australian Education*, Pergamon Press, Sydney, 1976. (edited with G.S. Harman)
- Public Sector Personnel Policies: Next Steps*, Public Sector Management Institute, Monash University, Melbourne, 1989. (edited with D.C. Corbett and R.F.I. Smith)
- Practice and Policy in Community Care: New Directions in Australia*, Public Sector Management Institute, Monash University, Melbourne, 1990. (edited with A. Howe and E. Ozanne)
- Australian Health Review*, Special Issue on Health Program Evaluation, Vol. 15, No. 2, 1992. (edited with C. Doyle)
- The Economics of Education 1992*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1993. (edited with G. Burke, F. Ferrier, L. Maglen and P. McKenzie)
- Economic Evaluation in Australian Health Care*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1995. (edited with M.F. Drummond)
- The Economics of Education 1994*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1995. (edited with F. Ferrier)
- The Economic Impact of Vocational Education and Training*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1996. (edited with F. Ferrier)
- The Economics of Vocational Education and Training in Australia: CEET's Stocktake*, NCVER, Adelaide (with Selby Smith, C, Ferrier, F, Anderson, D, Burke, G, Hopkins, S, Long, M, Maglen, L, Malley, J, McKenzie, P & Shah C.) 2001

Articles and Chapters

- "Costs and Benefits in Further Education: Some Evidence from a Pilot Study", *Economic Journal*, September 1970, pp. 583-604.
- "Benefits to British Employers from Post-Secondary Education", *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Series A, Vol. 132, Part 3, 1969, pp. 408-417.
- "Discrimination by British Employers", *Race*, Vol. XII, No. 2, 1970, pp. 201-206.
- "Resource Allocation in Education", *Journal of Educational Administration*, Vol. IX, No. 2, October 1971, pp. 135-150.
- "An Economic Approach to Teacher Loss and Retention" in A.T. Davies and C. Duke (eds), *The Retention of Teachers*, Centre for Continuing Education, ANU, December 1971.
- "Course Costs in Colleges of Advanced Education", *Australian Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 4, No. 3, December 1972, pp. 178-192.
- "Selecting an Optimal Set of Manpower Requirements when Skill Substitution is Possible", *The British Journal of Industrial Relations*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 1972 (with M.L. Skolnik).
- "An Economic Approach to Teacher Loss and Retention", *The Australian Journal of Education*, Vol. 17, No. 2, June 1973, pp. 142-152.
- "Faculty Costs in Australian Universities", *The Australian University*, Vol. 11, No. 2, September 1973, pp. 87-108.
- "The Macro-Economics of Educational Renewal", *Twentieth Century*, December 1974, pp. 117-132.
- "Rates of Return to Post-Secondary Education in Australia", *Economic Record*, December 1975, pp. 455-485.

¹ The assistance of Pat Knight from ACER's Cunningham Library is gratefully acknowledged.

- The Macro-Economics of Educational Renewal", in J.W. D'Cruz and P.J. Sheehan (eds) *The Renewal of Australian Schools: Essays in Educational Planning in Australia after the Karmel Report*, Primary Education, Melbourne, 1975, pp. 117-132.
- Current Trends and Issues in the Governance of the Australian Colleges of Advanced Education", in L.J. Barker (ed), *Governance of the Australian Colleges of Advanced Education*, Downs Press, Toowoomba, 1975, pp. 92-120 (with G.S. Harman).
- "The Cost of Failure in Australian Universities and CAEs", *The Australian University*, Vol. 13, No. 2, July 1975.
- "Economies of Scale in Australian Colleges of Advanced Education", pp. 102-127 in E.R. Treyvaud (ed.), *College Administration: Policies and Problems in Colleges of Advanced Education*, Downs Press, Toowoomba, 1975.
- "Rates of Return to Post-Secondary Education in Australia", Institute of Labour Studies, Flinders University of South Australia, Adelaide, 1975.
- "Non-Metropolitan Colleges of Advanced Education in Australia", *Education Research and Perspectives*, Vol. 3, No. 1, June 1976, pp. 3-17.
- "Some Current Trends and Issues in the Governance of Australian Colleges of Advanced Education", *Australian Journal of Education*, Vol. 20, No. 2, June 1976, pp. 129-148 (with G.S. Harman).
- "Restructuring Office Work in the Australian Public Service", in D.C. Corbett, C. Selby Smith and R.F.I. Smith (eds), *Public Sector Personnel Policies: Next Steps*, Public Sector Management Institute, Monash University, Melbourne, 1989, pp. 193-218.
- "Public Sector Personnel Policies for the 1990s", *Asia Pacific Human Resource Management*, November 1989, pp. 53-62, (Invited Paper with D.C. Corbett).
- "Review of Health Care Systems - Moral Conflicts in European and American Public Policy", *Bioethics*, Vol. 4, No. 1, January 1990, pp. 86-90.
- "Mobility and Recruitment", *The Canberra Bulletin of Public Administration*, July 1990, pp. 119-126.
- "Educating Public Sector Managers: Is the MBA the Way To Go?", *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. 50, No. 2, June 1991, pp. 187-190.
- "Australian Health Care Spending", *Oxford Analytica Health Care Brief*, Oxford, November 1991.
- "A New Career Service?", in M. Gardner (ed.), *Human Resource Management and Industrial Relations in the Public Sector*, Macmillan, South Melbourne, 1992.
- "Health Economics and Policy: Problems and Prescriptions by Malcolm C. Brown: A Review", in C. Selby Smith and C. Doyle (ed.), *Australian Health Review*, Special Issue on Health Program Evaluation, second issue, 1992, pp. 228-229.
- "Increasing the Impact of Health Technology Assessments", pp. 681-684 in M.K. Chytil, G. Durn, W. van Eimeren, Ch.D. Flagle (eds.), *Health Systems – The Challenge of Change*, Omnipress, Prague, 1992 (with M. Drummond and D. Hailey).
- "Workplace Strategic Change", pp. 423-442 in J. Marceau (ed.), *Reworking the World: Organisations, Technologies and Cultures in Comparative Perspective*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, 1992.
- "Career Structure for Nursing: The Commonwealth Nurses Case of 1986-87", National Key Centre for Industrial Relations, Monash University, Working Paper No. 30, 1994 (with G. Moffatt).
- "Health Care Economics Part 1: Some Key Concepts", *The Australian Nurses Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 9, pp. 22-26, April 1993 (with J. Selby Smith).
- "Health Care Economics Part 2: The Australian Health Care `Jigsaw'", *The Australian Nurses Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 10, pp. 28-30, May 1993 (with J. Selby Smith).
- "The Health Labour Force: Part 3 of Health Care Economics", *The Australian Nursing Journal*, pp. 32-37, June 1993 (with J. Selby Smith).
- "Evaluation of New Health Technologies", *The Australian Nursing Journal*, pp. 32-34, August 1993 (with J. Selby Smith).
- "Health Insurance: Part 5 of Health Care Economics", *The Australian Nursing Journal*, pp. 41-43, September 1993 (with J. Selby Smith).
- "Aged Care and Pharmaceuticals: Part 6 of Health Care Economics", *The Australian Nursing Journal*, pp. 32-35, October 1993 (with J. Selby Smith).
- "Summary of Discussion", pp.145-150 in Economic Planning Advisory Council, *Investing in Health Care: A Challenging Future*, Background Paper No. 34, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1993.
- "The Role of Economic Appraisal in Health Technology Assessment: The Australian Case", *Social Science and Medicine*, with M.H. Drummond and D.M. Hailey, Vol. 38, No. 12, pp. 1653-1662, 1994.
- "Pathways to Improved Impact from Economic Evaluations of Health Technologies", with K.M. Antioch and D. Hailey in A. Harris (ed.), *Economics and Health 1994*, School of Health Administration, University of New South Wales, Kensington, 1995.
- "The Australian Health Care Industry", in *Australian Health and Medical Industry Directory 1994/95*, pp. 9-22, Peter Isaacson Publications, Melbourne, 1994.

- "Restructuring Office Work in the Australian Public Service", Ch. 9, pp. 115-128 in M. Patrickson, V. Bamber and G.J. Bamber (eds.), *Organisational Change Strategies: Case Studies of Human Resource and Industrial Relations Issues*, Longman Cheshire, South Melbourne, 1994.
- "Parliamentary Committees, Public Servants and Due Process", *The Australian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. 54, No. 1, pp. 19-33, March, 1995, (with D.C. Corbett).
- "Pricing Options in NSW TAFE", Monash University-ACER Centre for the Economics of Education and Training, Working Paper No. 1, 1995 (with L. Maglen).
- "The Nexus Between Health Labour Force Research and Policy", *Annual Review of Health Social Sciences*, Vol. 5, pp. 1-18, 1995.
- "Labour Force Planning Issues for Allied Health in Australia", (with S. Crowley), *Journal of Allied Health*, Vol. 24, No. 4, pp. 249-265, Fall 1995.
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- "National Evaluation of the 1996 User Choice Pilot Projects: Stage 2. A Report to ANTA", (with J. Selby Smith and Fran Ferrier), April 1997.
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- 'VET and the work of volunteers' Bevan, F, Kanis, C & Roebuck, P (Eds) *Learning together, working together*, CLWR, Griffith University, Brisbane, pp.25-31 (with S. Hopkins) 2001
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- The experience of User Choice. Do the size and location of the firm make a difference?* A re-analysis of the results obtained from a survey of employer views conducted by the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry March 2001. CEET Working Paper No 40 (with F. Ferrier)
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- 'Reflections on the impact of research on policy development: a case study of user choice', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Vocational Education Research*, Vol.10, No.1, pp. 69-94, 2002 (with J. Selby Smith)
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- Health Economics as a Tool for Leaders*, World Health Organization, Copenhagen, 2003 (with Gunnarsson, D & Zöllner, H.)
- The user choice experience of Australian firms: A further investigation*, CEET Working Paper series, no. 49, Monash University, 2003 (with F. Ferrier)
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- The place of recognised qualifications in the outcomes of training*, NCVER, Adelaide, 2006 (with Ridoutt, L Dutneall R & Hummel, K)
- 'TVET research as an instrument of TVET planning, management and policy, the Australian case' Maclean, R & Wilson, D, (Eds) *International Handbook of Technical and Vocational Education and Training*, Kluwer, Dordrecht, 2007