

Fellowship Nomination of Dr Simon Smith
21 February 2019

Dr Simon Smith AM, PhD (Monash), LLM (Monash), LLB (Monash), B. Juris (Monash), is an Adjunct Senior Research Fellow in the Faculty of Law at Monash University and an Adjunct Professor at the Sir Zelman Cowan Centre, Victoria University. He was a co-founder of Australia's first community legal service, the Springvale Legal Service. He has contributed to law education. Dr Smith was also the first ombudsman in the Australian financial services sector. He curated the Suncorp Insurance Archive now at the State Library of Victoria.

Dr Smith has been a longstanding member of the RHSV, in which he demonstrated significant leadership skills. He was a Councillor 2008–2012, Vice President 2009–2011, and was a driving force in establishing higher governance standards within Council. He was instrumental in establishing the RHSV Foundation to help secure the future of this society. The Foundation now holds significant assets to further the Society's work. Dr Smith championed retention of the Victorian Community History Awards during the competition's survival crisis of 2010 to 2011 and became inaugural chair of the RHSV's VCHA committee in 2011.

Dr Smith has made significant contributions to law and history writing. His publications include *Maverick Litigants: A History of Vexatious Litigants in Australia 1930–2008* (2009); *Barristers Solicitors Pettifoggers: Profiles in Australian Colonial Legal History* (2014); and a chapter on the community legal services movement, *Breaking Out: Memories of Melbourne in the 1970s* (2015). In recent years he edited the outstanding *Judging for the People: A Social History of the Supreme Court in Victoria 1841–2016* (2016).

The history of the Supreme Court project to commemorate the Court's 175th anniversary was the brainchild of Dr Smith. This history, besides being a ground-breaking social history approach to institutional legal histories, has significantly boosted the presence of the RHSV in Melbourne and Victoria. Dr Smith conceived this idea and also managed this difficult project's implementation in a sustained way during 2014–2016. This involved securing the *pro bono* contribution of a dozen authors and the support and cooperation of many legal entities. With the help of the RHSV President, as well as several councillors, Dr Smith convinced the Chief Justice of Victoria and the Court to fund the RHSV to manage this project, significantly adding to the RHSV Foundation's reserves. He also persuaded leading law bodies and firms in Melbourne to fund the book's publication and liaised with Allen & Unwin to do so.

The book, associated conference and exhibition have and will continue to bring significant prestige to the RHSV. I commend Dr Simon Smith's award of a RHSV Fellowship.



Dr Richard Broome FRHSV, FAHA

Emeritus Professor in History, La Trobe University and RHSV Councillor