

Obituary

Bob Kinnaird

It is with much sadness that we report that Bob Kinnaird, a long-time member of TAPRI recently passed away. He was felled by a blood disease. Bob had a long career engaging with labour market issues as a public servant, private consultant and as an advisor, employed by the CFMEU. He was remarkable for the consistency with which he pursued these concerns. We published a number of his reports. In retirement he was an active supporter of TAPRI and will be greatly missed on this account, among others.

For the past couple of decades his focus was on the protection of local workers' interests against competition from the high influx of migrants on temporary-entry visas. His continuing concern was about the undermining of Australian resident wages and working conditions as some employers and Labour hire firms employed these migrants under a variety of casual terms. He contributed significantly to the union campaign to diminish this competition, as manifested in the current Labor Government's industrial relations reforms. Labor's proposed legislation is currently under fire from business interests. Bob never wavered in his advocacy for such legislation. His great disappointment was that the trade unions did not accompany their lobbying for such legislation by related advocacy to slow the entry of temporary workers (including overseas students) into Australia.

For years, Bob, pursued forensic studies of the overseas student industry, which he regarded as diminishing the standing of Australian universities as well as impacting on the labour market, as just noted. He collaborated with TAPRI nearly two decades ago on a study of the explosion of vocational colleges in the cooking and hair dressing fields whose enrolments was fueled by the access to permanent residence that these credentials then provided. This study ('Cooks Galore and Hairdressers aplenty' ([People and Place](#) Vol 15, No 2, 2007) contributed to subsequent government reform which essentially removed this pathway.

In the past few years, despite battling with ill-health, he returned to this issue and was well advanced on a comprehensive study of the current surge in overseas student enrolments. His focus was on the ways successive governments had allowed increasing numbers of overseas students to enter Australia without the financial means to pay for their fees and living expenses while studying. These students, he documented, had no choice but to immediately enter our labour market, often on terms and conditions that undermined those hitherto enjoyed by resident young people. Sadly, his disease prevented him from completing this study.

Bob is survived by his partner Liz, who also has been a greater supporter of TAPRI. We at TAPRI extend to her our deepest condolences.



Bob Kinnaird, TAPRI member