



# Members in Profile

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## David Rich

At school, I recall two particular interests, one in history, particularly economic history, and one in geography. The latter was spawned by an interest in places, regions and landscapes. The decision to opt for geography as a degree subject was entirely pragmatic – I thought there would be more job opportunities arising from geography than history! I have never regretted the choice, but frequently I find geography and history merging in my perspectives on the world, and indeed in some of my geographical research.



After undergraduate and postgraduate study in geography Cambridge, my career has followed three phases. Initially, I held lecturing positions in economic and urban geography, first at the University of Exeter and then from 1976 at Macquarie University. My research explored regional development and industrial change with focuses at different times on Scotland, Sydney, Australian manufacturing and South Australia. During this period, I was a GSNSW Councillor and then Editor of *Australian Geographer* between 1984 and 1992, and eventually a Fellow of the Society.

During the 1990s, I became progressively more interested in the scholarship of learning and teaching, and particularly the effective use of technology to increase access to education and enhance the learning experience. That led to an opportunity to establish and lead the Centre for Flexible Learning at Macquarie, something that eventually brought a move away from teaching and research in geography. In many ways, this was an exciting phase of my career, with the opportunity to develop and try out new models of education supported by emerging technologies and new business models.

In 2004, I moved to the University of New England, initially as Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) and then as DVC (Academic). Then in 2007 came the opportunity to move to the University of Tasmania as its first Provost. In many ways, my long-standing interests in place, regionalism and industrial restructuring have been revived in the Tasmanian context which daily provides case studies of the importance of these phenomena. One of the exciting things about the role has been to work on models of regional economic development underpinned by higher education in a state that desperately needs new economic drivers and much enhanced levels of educational attainment.

I retired from the position of Provost in December 2013 and for the next two years I will work with UTAS on a 20 per cent basis as coordinator of the University's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in 2015. As Australia's fourth oldest university, and now a rapidly rising profile, there is much to celebrate!

But retirement from full-time work will allow me time to indulge my passions – mostly severely constrained by work pressures in recent years – for gardening, photography, reading, family history, cinema and the performing arts. I will continue as Deputy Chair of the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and Chair of Theatre North, a group that operates the theatre in Launceston. On the photography front, I want to develop my skills as a landscape photographer, perhaps another connection with the interest in place and environment that led me into a career as a geographer.

My wife Glenys and I will continue to live in the beautiful Tamar Valley north of Launceston, using this as a base for yet another indulgence – for international travel.