

VALE CHRISTOPHER HOLT AM

The Australian Institute of Administrative Law notes with great sadness the sudden and unexpected death on 4 September 2014 of Chris Holt, publisher and co-founder of The Federation Press. Law publishing was a narrow field in 1987 when Chris and his two colleagues, Kathryn Fitzhenry and Diane Young, took the bold step of leaving one of the two dominant legal publishers in Australia at the time, the Law Book Company, to establish The Federation Press as a small, independent legal publisher. Their venture has blossomed into a major legal publishing house with more than 400 leading works in its list. He leaves a publishing house distinguished by its strong sense of social justice, something demonstrated in its publishing philosophy, which states:

The Federation Press believes ideas are important and that books remain unrivalled as a forum for communication, analysis and debate on ideas. We encourage authors to write books that not only convey information but which also engage current debates and stimulate the intellect. We encourage the use of language which is clear and unambiguous.

Chris remained strongly committed to that philosophy with the consequence that it is a discernible theme in the wide range of legal and related fields found under The Federation Press imprint. A further consequence is that the output of The Federation Press has made a notable contribution, not only to the law, but also to Australian law and society.

A feature of being an author in The Federation Press stable is that, despite the growth in the business, it was Chris to whom authors talked about their work. He was a great friend and supporter of authors and always remained positive and unflappable, no matter what snags, delays and crises punctuated his daily working life. He will be sadly missed, but the strength of the principles underpinning his publishing house is such that his legacy will live on at The Federation Press.

Peter Sutherland