

# Editorial

## **Prato Comparative CGT Conference 2017**

This special issue is devoted to Professor Chris Evans (School of Taxation and Business Law (TABL), UNSW Sydney) who was instrumental in establishing the *eJournal* in 2003. It marks his formal retirement from UNSW Sydney, although he continues in academia with fractional appointments at UNSW Sydney and at the University of Pretoria.

Chris is an outstanding, all-round tax academic who has made, and continues to make, an enormous contribution to the discipline of taxation. As an academic leader, he was the Director of the rapidly growing Australian School of Taxation (Atax) at UNSW Sydney from 2001 to 2006. As a teacher, Chris has inspired generations of undergraduate and postgraduate tax students, mainly in Australia but also through his visiting positions at universities in Austria (Vienna University of Economics and Business), Canada (University of British Columbia), New Zealand (University of Canterbury) and the UK (University of Oxford). He is co-author of two core text books in Australia: *Australian Taxation Law*, now in its 29<sup>th</sup> edition, and *Australian CGT Handbook* (formerly *Cooper & Evans on CGT* and now in its 10<sup>th</sup> edition).

In terms of research, he is a prolific scholar who regularly publishes in quality tax journals around the world. While his research interests are diverse, his contributions to capital gains taxation and tax compliance costs are most widely acknowledged. He has successfully led Australian Research Council Linkage projects on personal income tax reform, tax complexity and Australia–China tax barriers, as well as conducting research for many other bodies, both national and international. In addition, he has successfully supervised many MPhil and PhD graduates in taxation. More recently, as an Extraordinary Professor at the University of Pretoria, Chris has been responsible for raising the profile of tax research in South Africa and in Africa at large. He was recently formally recognised as a “Leading International Scholar” by South Africa’s National Research Foundation.

Chris has been an influential tax expert through his engagement with the tax academia, tax profession and tax authorities around the world. A sample of such roles includes: Editor in Chief of the *Australian Tax Review* (an A-ranked journal) from 2014 to 2016; International Research Fellow, Centre for Business Taxation, University of Oxford; Visiting Fellow at the Tax Administration Research Centre at the University of Exeter; Inaugural Chair of the Asia–Pacific Branch of the UK’s Chartered Institute of Taxation; various positions with CPA Australia and Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand. He has acted as a consultant to the Australian Taxation Office, the Board of Taxation, the New Zealand Inland

Revenue, the World Bank and various overseas governments and government agencies. His awards are many, including: the UNSW Staff Development Award in 2004; the CPA Australia National President's Award in 2004; and the Australasian Tax Teachers Association (ATTA) Medal in 2007.

To celebrate the occasion of Chris' 65<sup>th</sup> birthday, an international conference was organised by three of his long-time colleagues, Professor Rick Krever, Dr Peter Mellor and Professor Binh Tran-Nam. Reflecting a major strand of Chris' research interests, the conference was titled Comparative Capital Gains Taxation (CGT) and held at the Prato campus of Monash University from 26 to 28 September 2017, with very kind support from the Accounting for Social Change Research Group, QUT Business School, Queensland University of Technology, TABL, the Law School, University of Western Australia and PwC. The conference brought together a group of Chris' colleagues and former students from Australia, Canada, Hungary, New Zealand, South Africa, the UK and the US to discuss latest developments in CGT.

This special issue is a collection of selected papers presented at the Prato Conference on Comparative CGT. It consists of six articles that cover both general and country-specific CGT issues. The authors are colleagues, co-authors, co-editors and former PhD students of Chris. The articles have all been subjected to the usual, rigorous peer review process.

In the opening article, Kristin Hickman provides a comprehensive and critical examination of Chris' major intellectual contributions, namely: CGT; tax compliance costs; and tax system complexity. In her cogent analysis, Kristin has succeeded not only in highlighting Chris' contributions to the tax literature but also connecting the three strands of scholarship produced by him over the last three decades.

The second article is a joint work of Theuns Steyn, Sharon Smulders, Karen Stark and Ilinza Penning, all colleagues of Chris at the University of Pretoria or the nearby University of South Africa. They innovatively apply a systematic review methodology to explore the rich diversity in the CGT literature. Their synthesis of past articles, according to year of publication, country, research design, method of analysis and themes, provides valuable information to tax researchers and tax policy makers.

In the third article, John Hasseldine and Darius Fatemi consider the blurred boundary between capital gains and ordinary income. Focusing on a particular tax case, the authors discuss how experimental research can contribute to wider policy issues including tax complexity, tax reform, and tax professionals' judgements and decisions – particularly those involving client advocacy.

The last three articles deal with country-specific CGT issues. In the Australian case, Brett Freudenberg and John Minas argue against the 50 percent CGT discount to resident individuals but recommend a pragmatic approach of incremental reform of the discount rather than its outright abolition. In the next article, François Vaillancourt and Anna Kerkhoff present a comprehensive and critical review of the evolution of the Canadian CGT in a federal setting from

1972 to 2017. In the final article, Kerrie Sadiq and Adrian Sawyer discuss previous attempts at introducing a CGT into New Zealand and outline some of the key policy choices, based on Australian experiences, that would need to be carefully considered by the New Zealand Government in introducing a separate CGT regime.

We commend this special issue to you and trust you will enjoy it.

John Taylor, TABL, UNSW Sydney  
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