

## CPM Reviews

**Transcript:** Research Interview

**SENSITIVE:** Personal

### File Details

**Job Name:** AEU History Project

**Billing Ref:** PO No

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**Total Minutes:** 41 recorded minutes

**Date of Recording:** 9 July, 2019

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Identifier	Name / Position	Role
<b>Mr Haggar:</b>	<b>Mr Clive Haggar, Former Secretary</b>	<b>Interviewer</b>
Mr Chapman:	Mr Lance Chapman, Former Principal	Interviewee

### Start of Transcript

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**Mr Haggar:** It's 9<sup>th</sup> July and I'm interviewing Mr Lance Chapman, early founder of our system and long term principal, and a range of other active roles in the ACT Education System, and Lance has happily agreed to be interviewed by me today.

**So Lance, if you wouldn't mind, I'd like you to begin from your early days as a teacher, or even a trainee teacher in the New South Wales system.**

**Mr Chapman:** Alright. Well I'll just start talking about Sam Lewis because I came in to – I was very active in the Teachers Federation as a trainee and Sam was the head of it. He really set the agenda, he set the tone for the union at that time.

We really admired him, some people more than admired him, but we certainly admired him for his commitment to teaching and to the working class generally.

At that stage I headed up a state-wide campaign for teacher trainees to be given adequate living allowances.

**Mr Haggart:** **So, this would have been in...?**

Mr Chapman: This was '54/'55. And that campaign was state-wide, as I said, and we got some amazing support. Eric Boham, for instance, who was the shock jock of his day, actually supported us. We were amazed that he came out in favour of us, yeah. Anyway, the long and short of it was that we had this campaign which went the whole of '55 and it was in fact very successful because there were big increases in living allowances at the end of the year. It was the next lot of students got the benefit. We didn't get any benefit; the next lot of students got the benefit of increased living allowance.

It was because of the living allowances that I became a teacher. I mean, I got a scholarship, initially two year scholarship, then they offered me a four year scholarship but I didn't take the four year scholarship.

**Mr Haggart:** **This would have been to do honours?**

Mr Chapman: No, this was just to do an undergraduate degree. See when I started at Sydney Tertiary College in '54 I didn't get a first-round offer, obviously, because I went to Teachers College. But the principal called me down, he said there's more scholarships, there's a scholarship for you to do a four-year course, but I didn't because my personal family circumstances would have made it impossible to have done a degree at that stage. It just wasn't conducive. So, I took the two-year scholarship but there was a living allowance to it and so that's what I survived on.

Anyway, that was that. When they used to have annual conferences and things like that, the Teachers Federation annual conference, I was asked to speak both years. And I was asked to welcome the Minister for Education and butter him up a bit, there was all that sort of garbage, you know.

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The federation was definitely grooming me for leadership roles in the federation, but I went away to the country to teach and they didn't even follow that up.

**Mr Haggar:**           **So what was your first posting?**

Mr Chapman:       A place called – first posting was Scone District Rural School. I only got to stay there for two terms and then there was a married woman wanted to come back to teach and she was only prepared to teach in Scone, so I was moved to give her the position.

**Mr Haggar:**           **As a single male.**

Mr Chapman:       The shoofed me off to another town for a term. And I was very lucky because when I went to the school the first day I said to the kids, look I'm coming here to teach you and I need a place to stay. That was in the morning. Anyway, one of the kids used to go home for lunch, and so at the end of the lunch break this kid, his name's Leith Crosley, he came, [puffing] sir, [panting] mum said [puffing] she'll have you. He had a brother who was away studying to be a teacher and I got his room.

They had to give me a primary school position because that's all that was available in that time, so I taught primary for a term, and then next year I got moved to Stroud. No-one had heard of Stroud of course. And so I went to Stroud, and Stroud was – had seven teachers in it all together, four in the primary and three in the secondary.

**Mr Haggar:**           **Do you remember how many students?**

Mr Chapman:       Yeah, it would have been 52 in the secondary, and 130 in the primary.

**Mr Haggar:**           **So three teachers for 52.**

Mr Chapman:       Now one of the teachers in the secondary department was the principal, who only had to teach about – probably taught half his time, or a bit less, yeah. So, we didn't have three teachers, we had 2.4 teachers for the 52 kids that were in the secondary. The secondary department, it fluctuated, but usually about 30 kids in first year, about 20 kids in second year, or maybe less. It would be about 18 kids in second year, and about seven kids in third year.

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**Mr Haggar:** **Right, so they were dropping off, age related.**

Mr Chapman: As they turned 14 years and whatever number of months it was, they'd be out of there. The kids had not much ambition. There was only one kid at Stroud who wanted to make something of himself, and he did too. He became a lecturer at University of Western Sydney in the fine arts. Then he worked in – he started out as a two-year trained primary teacher then he did his degree and moved up through the ranks. He was the only kid in a school that had – there was one other kid who tried but he couldn't make it, he didn't get there. But two kids in my time that went on to fourth year.

Then, of course, Wyndham Scheme. Now, in 1961 I'd founded the Stroud branch of the Labor party and we had a big membership too.

**Mr Haggar:** **Was Stroud a working class town? Or more rural?**

Mr Chapman: It was a rural town, but it was represented by Leon Punch.

**Mr Haggar:** **Right. A well known New South Wales politician.**

Mr Chapman: Country Party person. So, there was no hope of getting elected, really, but none the less I formed a Stroud branch and I built it up to be the biggest country branch in New South Wales. It didn't have to be very big, it only had to have about 50 or 60 members. But I got all the Shortland County Council blokes into it and they were the foundation of it really, they were the electricity blokes, you know. But we had a few blokes from the shire council. We had one dairy farmer; he was a share farmer. We had the barber, we had the SP bookie, we had the publican. Our meetings were held in the pub on Sunday morning.

**Mr Haggar:** **And of course, it wouldn't have been open at that time.**

Mr Chapman: No. We were upstairs, upstairs. No, it wasn't open, but we went there and had our meetings up there.

Yeah, so anyway, the New South Wales Labor Party had its annual conference in the basement of Sydney Town Hall. Had a big meeting, maybe 2,000 people.

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**Mr Haggar:** **It must have been absolutely packed. I've been in that hall for big meetings. 2,000's a big number in that space.**

Mr Chapman: I think it was, it was certainly over 1,000. It mightn't have been 2,000 but it was close to it. Any rate, so the New South Wales Labor Party held its annual conference in 1961. I was a delegate and they had to – they wanted to get the Wyndham Scheme adopted. Now the Wyndham Report had been written two or three, maybe even four years before and the government was sitting on it, doing nothing.

**Mr Haggar:** **And of course it was an expansion of secondary education to an additional year to make it six years of secondary.**

Mr Chapman: That's right, that's what it was. And certainly the Catholic system didn't want it, but the union was – sorry, the ALP decided that they wanted it introduced.

**Mr Haggar:** **And you had a role in that decision?**

Mr Chapman: I was the seconder of the motion at the annual meeting of the Labor party that the Wyndham Scheme shall be implemented without delay. And it was brought in the next year.

**Mr Haggar:** **Right. Had there been a change of government by that next year?**

Mr Chapman: No.

**Mr Haggar:** **So it was done by a conservative government?**

Mr Chapman: No, it was done by the Labor government.

**Mr Haggar:** **Oh, right, So they'd been sitting on it.**

Mr Chapman: Labor was in power and they'd been in power for a long time, but they weren't doing anything about it. So the Labor party decided they wanted him there to implement it without delay. I've got a letter in here from the secretary of the union thanking me for my fine work and so on. I'll show it to you later. So that was my role there and it was, as Cath Blakers says in her – you've got this of course, you've seen that one?

**Mr Haggar:** **Yes. That's the...**

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Mr Chapman: Barry Price.

**Mr Haggar: Barry Price's paper. Yes, Cath Blakers being the parent at Campbell who...**

Mr Chapman: I made a copy for you in case you're interested, but you probably could make your own if you want to – there's a spare one if you want it.

**Mr Haggar: Oh right, okay. Well no, I'll take that because that's useful to have the spare. I've actually got a copy in my briefcase.**

Mr Chapman: I just highlighted a few things that I think are important. Yeah, Kath Bakers pointed out that they didn't have enough resources to implement this thing. They were really short of maths and science teachers then, as they are now.

**Mr Haggar: So what role was she at that particular point in time?**

Mr Chapman: Kath Bakers was here in the ACT when the scheme was implemented. She described the situation here as chaotic. But anyway, I was just starting my degree. I was in Stroud and I did my degree in Stroud. Then I moved to Armidale for the honours degree. And the first year I went to Armidale I didn't attempt it because I had to take senior classes for the first time so I knew what my limits were. So, I didn't do any study until the following year.

And then, in that year, Margaret and I both got our promotion eligibility.

**Mr Haggar: Right. This is the famous list.**

Mr Chapman: Yeah. I've got a stud book in there somewhere too. Have you ever seen a stud book?

**Mr Haggar: I have seen one, but years ago. I know what it is.**

Mr Chapman: Yeah, it's got every teacher in New South Wales who was on a promotions list, what year they got their list and all that sort of thing.

**Mr Haggar: And in order to get on the list you had to pass an inspector's assessment.**

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Mr Chapman: The first thing you had to do was you had to get list one. List one did not give you eligibility to be promoted, it did not. It just said that you were an efficient and effective teacher. And I got that in Stroud, in about my third or fourth year of teaching, but I just sat on that because I didn't have list two. It was list two that opened up the gates.

**Mr Haggar: And the descriptors were interesting because you were described as assistant teachers, weren't you, in those early days?**

Mr Chapman: Yeah.

**Mr Haggar: Did list one give you the title teacher? Or were you still an assistant teacher?**

Mr Chapman: I always thought it was an assistant teacher. I think so, yeah. Yeah, I think so.

**Mr Haggar: And then with list one, did that guarantee permanency at that time?**

Mr Chapman: Oh, I guess so. I've never fussed about getting permanency because there were not enough teachers in New South Wales, we all knew that, yeah. Yes, so anyway I got my list two in Armidale in 1969, my second year in Armidale. And so then I applied for jobs, specifically I applied for the ACT because that was the only place, other than Sydney, which I wasn't going to go to, but the only place where there was a promotions positions for me and for Margaret. We both got our eligibility at the same time and we both took our promotion at the same time.

**Mr Haggar: So you got your list two. How old were you in 1969?**

Mr Chapman: Thirty-two.

**Mr Haggar: Thirty-two, right.**

Mr Chapman: Yeah, I had a long – actually I had a long apprenticeship because I was not eligible to get list two until I had taught senior classes, and there were no senior classes in Stroud.

**Mr Haggar: Yeah, so it was a geographical barrier.**

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Mr Chapman: But I liked it in Stroud because I was on the council, I was president of the Progress Association, I even played in the football team, a few games. And Margaret was working as well, it was very hard for us both working. In fact I know now that I wasn't pulling my weight at home, I wasn't doing enough housework.

**Mr Haggard: Like most of the generation.**

Mr Chapman: That's right.

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Mr Chapman: Yeah, well, the ACT teachers held meetings in the end of 1971 to discuss the proposal to establish colleges. They formed – well they elected people to go on this Working Party and there was Dick Lee, and there was...

**Mr Haggard: I think Dick Lee and Peter O'Connor were on it initially and then Barry Price and yourself.**

Mr Chapman: No, it wasn't Barry Price, no. Well, there was Dick Lee and Peter O'Connor, and then there were principals.

**Mr Haggard: Mick March was there.**

Mr Chapman: Mick March was one of them, yeah. And there was a fellow called Bob Green, he was a local inspector for New South Wales, and there were parents and then there was – Richard Campbell was elected originally as a parent but then he got himself to a different position, he was not a parent any longer, he was the chairman of the committee, and he wasn't responsible to the teachers – to the principals.

**Mr Haggard: To the parents?**

Mr Chapman: Parents Association. He got a free hand, in other words, yeah. But when Peter O'Connor resigned from the committee, we had to replace him and that was how I came on. I'd been an alternative member before then. I became a permanent member at that stage.



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**Mr Haggar:** So, you had this committee for the establishment of the colleges. What was the key issue for you in terms of decisions taken to set up a separate union?

Mr Chapman: Set up a separate union?

**Mr Haggar:** I mean, you had New South Wales Teachers Federation, which was opposed to the colleges.

Mr Chapman: That's right.

**Mr Haggar:** It was opposed to a separate education system for the ACT.

Mr Chapman: Yes.

**Mr Haggar:** It was opposed for a separate union. And in that August of '72 you have that mass meeting of the NSWTF members in Canberra, the two Teachers Associations coming together and they take the decision to have a separate ACT Teachers Union.

Mr Chapman: Yes. And?

**Mr Haggar:** Well, what I'm interested in is were they, from your memory, the three issues that pushed people into wanting to manage their own affairs from a union point of view?

Mr Chapman: I guess I've always regarded the ACT union members as progressive and forward thinking. And so, I had no doubt that we'd be better off by ourselves.

**Mr Haggar:** This is in terms of comparing it with the general New South Wales system?

Mr Chapman: Now when I was in New South Wales, when I was in Armidale in fact, we had the first ever teacher's strike.

**Mr Haggar:** This is 1968.

Mr Chapman: Yeah. Now, there would have been only about, in the whole of Armidale, there only would have been 15-20 teachers went out on strike.

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**Mr Haggar:**           **That's pretty poor.**

Mr Chapman:           That's right. They were all from high school, there was none from anywhere else.

**Mr Haggar:**           **And the strike was about conditions, about class sizes in particular.**

Mr Chapman:           Yeah.

**Mr Haggar:**           **About resourcing.**

Mr Chapman:           Yeah. Well the senior person there was Trevor Brew, who was the head of our English/History department. He was the leader of the group. As I said, maybe 15 perhaps, it mightn't be the right number to put on the number of – so I knew that there wasn't a good teacher attitude towards unionism, but the union attitude towards teaching was another thing. Different issues.

Like, the teachers weren't very supportive of the union when they had to, but the union wasn't very supportive of teachers, teaching, of education, of giving it a chance to shine. I could see that – well, I was on the Campbell Committee then, wasn't I, when we had the meeting at '72, wasn't it?

**Mr Haggar:**           **'72, yes.**

Mr Chapman:           Yeah, so I was all abuzz with the new ideas that we were putting through there and I knew that we needed a change in the system. But we also needed a change in the junior part of the high school and we didn't get it. And we didn't get the resources. We didn't get the leadership. And so when I applied for Belconnen High School I was paying my penance.

**Mr Haggar:**           **For what had taken place back in '74?**

Mr Chapman:           How we treated high schools. And I went back to the high schools to try and lift them.

**Mr Haggar:**           **Yeah, I can remember the – you know, certainly there was no question that the creation of the secondary colleges under the arrangements that led to their establishment in '74 gave them a staffing advantage,**

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and it gave secondary a staffing advantage with the establishment of the system over the primary schools.

You then of course had the Hayden budget come in which really took the razor to resourcing in what, from my understanding, was supposed to be the year in which there was going to be a boost in resourcing for the rest of the system. So that's something that may have been addressed in the primary schools in subsequent decades. But the reality is the high schools have not had a significant staffing improvement at all since the establishment of the system. There've been add-ons like youth workers perhaps, but not in terms of – and they have the largest class sizes in the system now.

Mr Chapman: Do they?

Mr Haggart: Well, you're doing your penance in Belconnen. You know, I'm still particularly interested in that period in which the local teachers – and it was a huge step to take basically, not only are we going to have a separate system, which was pushed very hard by progressive parents like Cath Blakers and the others, but we were also going to have a separate teaching service, we were going to restructure secondary education, and we think we'll have a separate union as well so we can control our own affairs. Looking at some of the records, as I've done, you've got the South Australians giving significant financial support to the creations of what became the Northern Territory Teachers Federation, and sixpence halfpenny being provided by New South Wales very begrudgingly to the ACT to make it viable. So, it is interesting just how negative they were.

I was wondering, because it's been suggested by – I think it's in Mick March's paper – that a part of that was because Canberra teachers had supported Len Childs in becoming president of the New South Wales Teachers Federation at a time when Len wasn't the preferred candidate of the main factions in the New South Wales Teachers Federation.

Mr Chapman: Yeah, I can't help you there.

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**Mr Haggar:** Right, okay.

Mr Chapman: Can't help you there, no. No, I can't help you. Sorry.

**Mr Haggar:** Right, okay. Just putting another hat on, I mean, you were a long-term successful principal in the system in two schools, and acting principal in others. How did you find your relations with union members over that time?

Mr Chapman: My relationship with union members?

**Mr Haggar:** Working with union branches and sub-branches, and union officers.

Mr Chapman: Look, yeah, I found them very supportive, yeah, especially when I had run-ins with the department.

**Mr Haggar:** I think a lot of principals saw the union as an insurance policy in terms of relations with what became a much more directive central office, particularly with self government.

Mr Chapman: Yeah.

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Mr Chapman: When I was at Belconnen High School we had a concept that Year 10 should have a bit of a chance to make decisions about how they spend their time, and so we wanted them to have one afternoon a week – this is not the sports afternoon, it's an additional afternoon, I think it was going to be Friday afternoon to be honest – when they could make decisions about how they would spend their time. It was going to be a little bit of college for the high school kids.

**Mr Haggar:** Right, a bit of a trial for them.

Mr Chapman: Yeah. Anyway, so we worked it out through the school board and we put the proposal to the Education Department. There was a bloke in the office whose name I just can't remember, I'm bugged if I can, but he said no. He had some formula which told him how many minutes we were supposed to be spending on education and he reckoned that if we took off this time from Year 10 we wouldn't be spending enough time.

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**Mr Haggar:** **Wouldn't count for minutes of instruction.**

Mr Chapman: No, that's right, wouldn't have enough minutes for instruction. Anyway, with the support of the board I persisted, but it wasn't to be. And I was called in and I was very seriously reprimanded for not being compliant with him. I don't know whether I called in the union at that stage, or not, but I think I may have.

**Mr Haggar:** **I don't remember it myself as an issue.**

Mr Chapman: Well that was before your time I think, wasn't it? What time did you come into the union?

**Mr Haggar:** **I came in in '82.**

Mr Chapman: '82.

**Mr Haggar:** **And then I was there for four years, and then went back teaching, and came back in in '88.**

Mr Chapman: Okay, yeah, came back in '88, yeah. Yeah, I see. I don't know whether – I don't think you were there anyway. That was my first run-in with the department and I don't know that the union supported me then or not, but I had later run-ins and I certainly got union support there.

Yeah, I think that I wasn't the right fit for a principal as far as the department was concerned.

**Mr Haggar:** **Well, I mean, it's interesting that with the establishment of the system that they were looking for innovation, they were looking for change. They knew what they didn't want to be. You had a chief executive in Hedley Beare who wanted significant change, but of course by '88 you had self government and a minister, the authority was abolished and became much more directed.**

Mr Chapman: I'll tell you what, when this happened, there's this incident with the Year 10 curriculum issue, the department was still in Macarthur House, Dickson.

**Mr Haggar:** **Yeah, there's no – it doesn't exist any more it's been knocked down.**

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Mr Chapman: Yeah, so we could date it from that if you know when that...

**Mr Haggar: I might be able to pick something up from the records.**

Mr Chapman: But any rate, this business about minutes of teaching is very interesting because Belconnen hours reduced the amount of teaching to what I had. We used to start at 8:30, they don't now.

**Mr Haggar: Right, in terms of the overall hours of operation.**

Mr Chapman: They don't – so that I'd say that they're not doing the hours that were prescribed. I don't whether it is a prescription now.

**Mr Haggar: Oh yeah, there's still a prescription. So, with that start to the system, I'm just trying to think back now in terms of 1981 you were a deputy principal, still at Hawker College, which is ...**

Mr Chapman: Oh well, yeah. Well I became principal in the beginning of 1984, but I'd been principal of Narrabundah College in 1980.

**Mr Haggar: Right, for the year?**

Mr Chapman: No, for two terms.

**Mr Haggar: For two terms, right.**

Mr Chapman: But in third term I took long service leave and I wrote my M Ed paper.

**Mr Haggar: Right, okay. Well in terms of covering off on the issues that I wanted to today, I think we've done it, which was essentially your early background in the union and the start of the system.**

**In terms of some of the significant campaign highlights, probably the standout would be when the workforce suspended at the beginning of 1982. 2,500 teachers were suspended by the federal government for taking industrial action. Now, as a participant in that action can you cast your mind back to that time?**

Mr Chapman: I don't think so.

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**Mr Haggar:**           **No, well you were always a very busy person. Alright, well we might bring the formal part of the conversation to a close Lance, unless there's some other points that you'd like to make.**

Mr Chapman:           Yeah. No, I don't think so.

**Mr Haggar:**           **Okay, well we'll stop there.**

[End of Transcript]