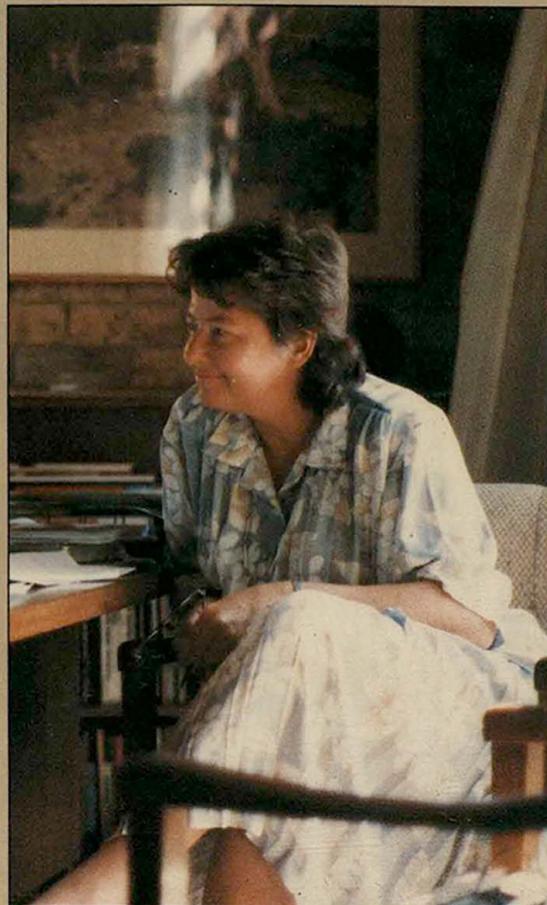
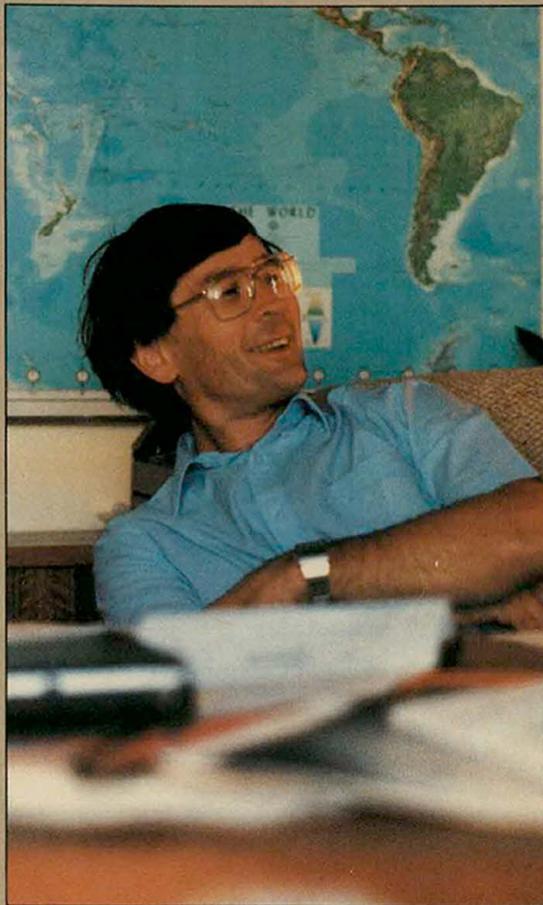


TALKING TO DICK SMITH

Elaine Furniss



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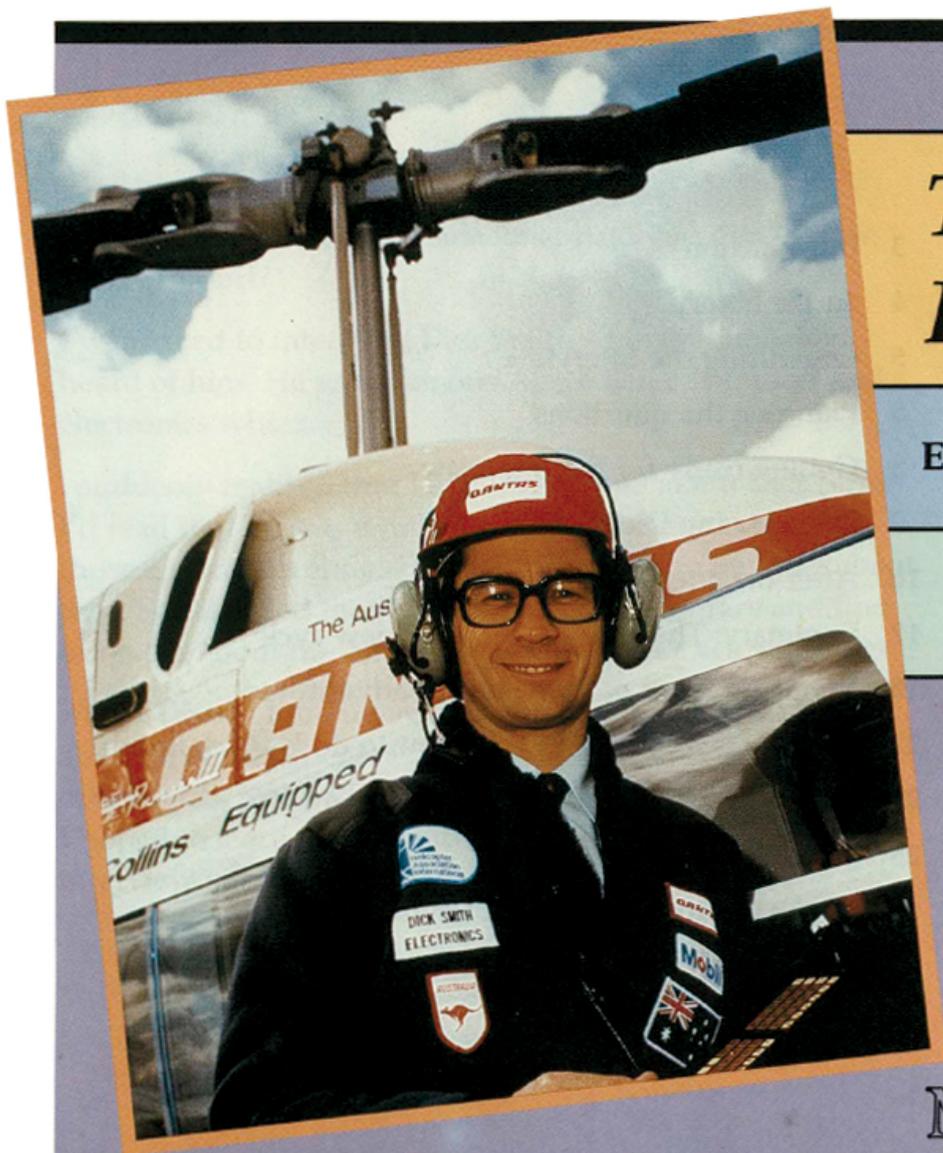
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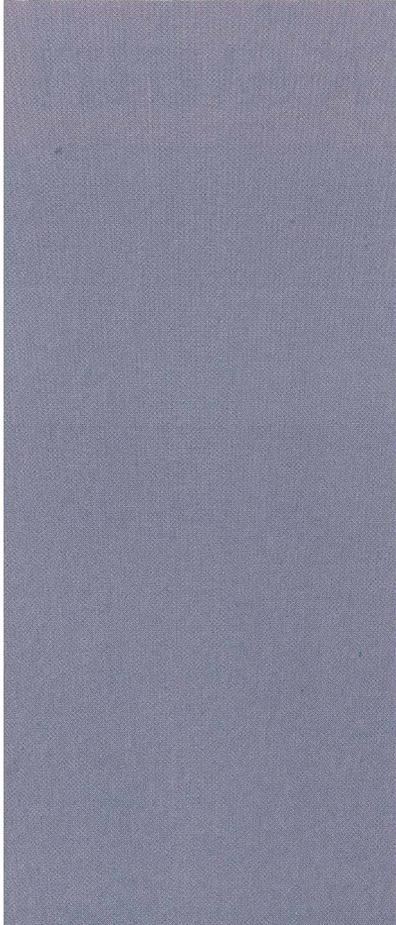


Talking to **DICK SMITH**

Elaine Furniss

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Contents

- 
- 3 Introduction
 - 4 At the library
 - 5 Organising the interview
 - 5 Planning the questions
 - 8 Getting ready for the interview
 - 9 Interviewing Dick Smith
 - 16 After the interview
 - 17 Summary: The steps of the interview cycle
 - 18 Retracing some of Dick Smith's adventures
 - 22 'Success is doing what you want to do.' – Dick Smith
 - 27 Putting something back into the country
 - 28 The *Australian Geographic*
 - 32 Books by, and about, Dick Smith

Introduction

So you have to interview someone. And you don't know where to start?

I was asked to interview Dick Smith – you've probably heard of him. He's the famous Australian adventurer and electronics whizz.

I suddenly realised that I knew very little about Dick Smith. I'd read that he was a millionaire after having owned all those electronics shops, but I couldn't talk to him just about that. So I decided that I had better go to a **library** and find out more about the other things that make Dick Smith tick.

At the **library** I discovered that he had written two books about his experiences. I borrowed these, as well as some other books that had been written about him. In this way, I hoped to learn more about his life and be able to plan my interview questions.

At the library

This is what I did at the library:

- I borrowed all the books Dick Smith had written and all the books other people had written about him.
- I took notes about Dick Smith's different experiences.
- I looked up reference books like the *Australian Biographical Dictionary* and the *Australian Who's Who?* to see what other people found interesting about Dick Smith's life.

This is what I found out at the library:

- Several books had been published telling about Dick Smith's business ventures in home electronics, CB radio, and personal computers.
- Yet another book dealt with Dick Smith's discovery of the lost aeroplane *Kookaburra* in the Tanami Desert in the Northern Territory; and
- A beautifully illustrated book described Dick Smith's solo flight across the world in a helicopter following the routes taken by early Australian aviators.
- A colour advertisement told me of his involvement in a new magazine: *Australian Geographic*.

Organising the interview

Now that I knew a lot more about Dick Smith, I rang his secretary and made an appointment for the interview.

I made sure to tell his secretary why I wanted to interview Dick Smith. I said I was writing a book about interviewing for kids. She asked me how much time I would need.

I estimated about half-an-hour. This meant I would need to be very well organised for the interview. I also asked whether Dick Smith wanted to see the interview questions in advance, whether I could audiotape the interview, and whether I could bring a photographer.

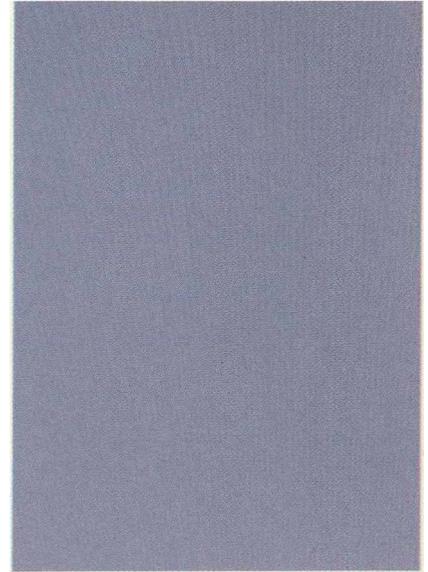
Dick Smith didn't want to see the interview questions in advance, but sometimes a person might wish to, in case you're planning difficult or tricky questions which may need some extra thought before the interview.

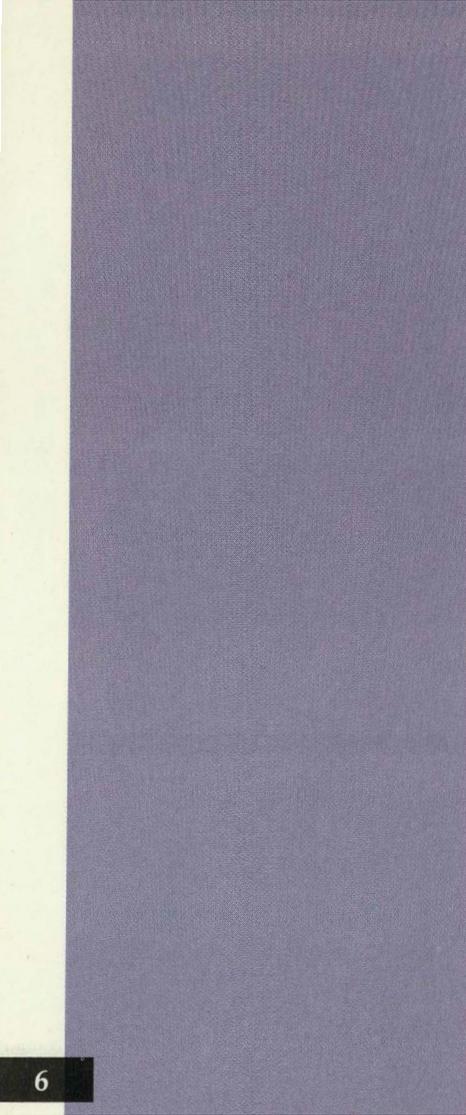
Planning the questions

After reading about Dick Smith in books and newspaper articles, I decided that I would base my interview questions around six themes.

These were:

- childhood
- business
- adventure
- charity
- what's happening now?
- advice for kids





There are two important points you need to remember when planning interview questions.

Firstly, it's better to have 'open-ended' questions rather than direct questions. An example of a *direct* question would be: 'Do you like the Prime Minister?' How would you answer? With a 'Yes' or a 'No' – and that wouldn't tell me very much about what you thought, would it?

An example of an *open-ended* question would be: 'What do you think of the Prime Minister?' Some people, if they were asked a question like that, would have plenty to say! Do you see the difference?

Secondly, you have to make sure that a question will help the person tell you what actually happened and what they think and why. The question must not make them answer in a limited way. For instance, I could ask a person 'How good (or how bad) do you think the Prime Minister is in dealing with the farmers?' This kind of question will make them say only what they think; it doesn't invite them to give the reasons why. They might prefer to be asked 'How do you feel about the Prime Minister's handling of the farm problem?' This is a far better question because I haven't shown any bias in the way I have asked it and have left them free to say what they want to say.

Thirdly, you have to make space in the interview in case the person you are interviewing says something really interesting which you hadn't planned to ask about. Let's

face it! You can't know everything about people before you meet them. That's why you're conducting the interview.

These are the questions I planned for the interview

Childhood

- 1) Can you tell me a bit about your childhood?
Do you think you grew up like other boys around you?
- 2) When did you start getting interested in electronics?

Business

- 3) Would you say that your life ambitions, those you had when you were a child, have been fulfilled?
- 4) Lester Brain, in the foreword to the book *Kookaburra*, called you a human dynamo. Do you think of yourself as such?
- 5) How has this helped you in your business ventures?

Adventure

- 6) You're known as a modern-day adventurer. Which of your adventures excites you most?
- 7) What sort of adventures do you have planned for the future?

Charity

- 8) I notice you've been involved in drug education: helping children understand about their bodies. Can you tell me about that?

What's happening now?

- 9) Can you talk about your present interest in your new magazine, *Australian Geographic*?



Advice for kids

- 10) If you had advice for kids who are reading about Dick Smith, what advice would you give?

Getting ready for the interview

The day of the interview arrived. I'd calculated how long it would take me to drive to the interview and added fifteen minutes so as not to be late. I didn't want to keep Dick Smith waiting as I knew he was a busy person.

I telephoned his secretary again, just to check that the appointment time was still all right.

The audio-tape recorder

I bought a good quality audio tape and new batteries for my portable cassette recorder. I had only thirty minutes for the interview and I didn't want to waste any of them looking for electric sockets. I checked the tape recorder. It recorded well. Dick Smith did the same thing when I arrived for the interview, but you shouldn't leave those details to the people you're interviewing. Not even if they're electronics experts like Dick Smith!

Taking photographs

A friend of mine came along to take photographs. This left me free to concentrate on the interview while she went about the job of getting some good pictures.

Interviewing *DICK SMITH*



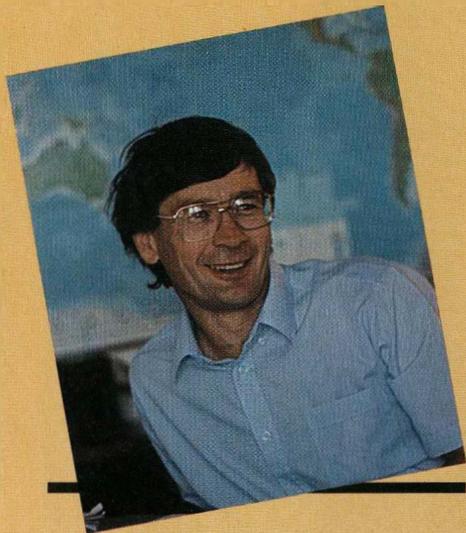
Naturally, I was quite nervous when I arrived but Dick Smith quickly put me at ease. We shook hands and I outlined once again why I wanted to interview him. Then we began the interview. In the edited transcript which follows I've left out the less important parts so that the interview reads as interestingly as possible. How and why I edited the interview is explained on page 16.

Can you tell me a bit about your childhood? Do you think you grew up like other boys around you?

No, I think I was probably quite different because I was always very much a loner. I was no good at sport and I was no good at school so I used to like doing things that were considered different, collecting lizards and things like that. I generally wasn't liked at school because I had slanty eyes and people used to call me Ching and Chong and I'd go home crying to my mother. She used to say 'Tell them the Chinese had the first civilisation in history,' but telling that to someone who was six or seven years of age wasn't really that wonderful. I found I didn't like my schooldays because I wasn't very good at school.

When did you start getting interested in electronics?

When I was about eight. My grandfather, Harold Cazneaux, the famous Australian photographer, lived opposite our house. I used to go across to his house where there was a room called Harold's room, which was always locked up. It had belonged to my grandfather's son (my uncle Harold). He was a radio enthusiast who died in the war (World War 2). They'd left the room locked up ever since. It must have been 1952, when I was eight, that I was given a key to that room. It contained all the old radio bits and pieces. That started my interest. I built my first crystal set when I was eight and I got a soldering iron when I was nine. From then on I loved two things: building crystal sets and the outdoors.



Would you say that your life ambitions, those you had when you were a child, have been fulfilled?

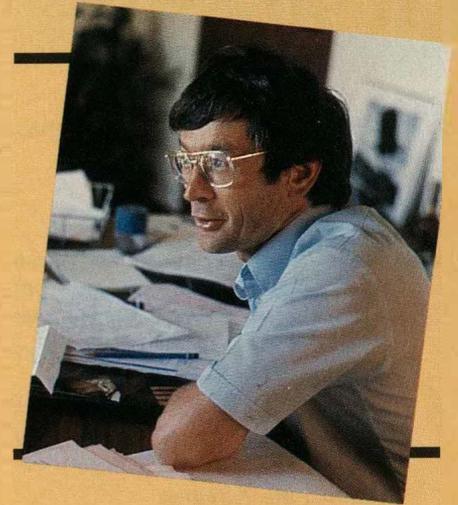
No, not really, because I didn't really have any ambitions. I never thought I'd get anywhere and success is such an unusual thing. Besides, I always judge success as doing what you'd like to do. So I suppose I've had some success because I've always been very fortunate in being able to direct my life and do what I want to do. Since the age of about twenty-two, I've had my own business, and by the age of thirty I'd also made a lot of money and that has allowed me to do the things I'd like to do.

Lester Brain, in the foreword to the book *Kookaburra*, called you a human dynamo. Do you think of yourself as such?

Yes, I suppose I'm more of a human dynamo than most people. I find many people completely lacking in discipline. They want things that they'd like to get, but are not prepared to work hard for them. At about twenty-two or three I realised that if I wanted to do what I wanted to do, I'd have to be disciplined.

How has this helped you in your business ventures?

By being a dynamo, if you've got enthusiasm, you can motivate other people so that they'll work with you. There's no way that I could have been successful by myself. I had no real education. I did get a Leaving Certificate, but only just, and I've got no qualifications. I've been successful because I've managed to surround myself with some very capable people.





** Dick's exciting adventure turned out to be an attempted helicopter flight over the North Pole. Unfortunately, they didn't succeed on this occasion. The following is an excerpt from Dick Smith's Supporters Newsletter for October 1986:*

Second Pole Attempt

I am just back from my second attempt on the North Pole. I was turned back this time only 90 miles from my destination. The reason? It's complex and fascinating and I'll tell the full story in issue 6.

You're known as a modern-day adventurer. Which of your adventures excites you most?

I'd say the adventure I like most is being with my family and camping out in the bush. Flying is something that I love but it's very mechanical. However, with a helicopter it's different. The great advantage of flying in a helicopter is that it's like being on a magic carpet. When you see something exciting, you can stop and land and look at it. I do that all the time.

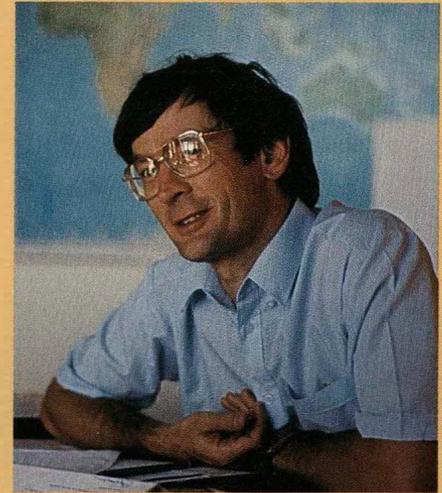
What sort of adventures do you have planned for the future?

Well, I've got an exciting adventure coming up, but it's a secret. My helicopter is heading off across the Pacific in a ship, to Vancouver. But it's a secret so I can't tell you about it.*

I notice you've been involved in drug education: helping children understand about their bodies. Can you tell me about that?

I've been very worried about young people. When I was young, there were drugs like alcohol and smoking nicotine but not drugs as we know them today. I think it's terrible that young people destroy themselves. Once a person's on drugs, it's quite often too late to do anything about it. I saw Ted Noffs' drug education program which teaches young children just how wonderful the human body is, and how you can damage it by taking drugs: alcohol, cigarettes or any other drug. No one can really stop you taking drugs,

but most people when they know the terrible damage that can be done, would prefer not to. When you think about it, everything's got a risk. I fly helicopters: that's risky. I go on adventures: that's risky. What you've got to do is balance up the risk with the amount of pleasure you get from it. Most people I've ever spoken to about drugs always end up with no pleasure at all and so it's not worth the risk. The drug education movement teaches kids that there are some beautiful things you can do with your body and there are some things which can destroy it: you have to make up your own mind.



Can you talk about your present interest in your new magazine, *Australian Geographic*?

I sold out of Dick Smith Electronics about three years ago. I wanted a new venture in life. I put my money into various industrial buildings which gives me an income. *Australian Geographic* was my hobby; to put something back into the country. Now it's become so successful that it's sheer hard work. It's a magazine that's going to be very positive, looking at the good side of things. Only because I think the media looks at the bad side and gives young people, especially, an unbalanced view, so that they tend to think that everything is bad, and that's not so. The magazine's been enormously successful and that's because of hard work. We're trying to make it really accurate and that's incredibly difficult.

If you had advice for kids who were reading about Dick Smith, what advice would you give?

I could give quite a bit of advice.

I have a little word, CASHED, which I always say is the points of success. Success has nothing to do with making money. It's doing what you'd like to do.

C – Communicate

A – Ask

S – Simple

H – Honesty

E – Enthusiasm

D – Discipline

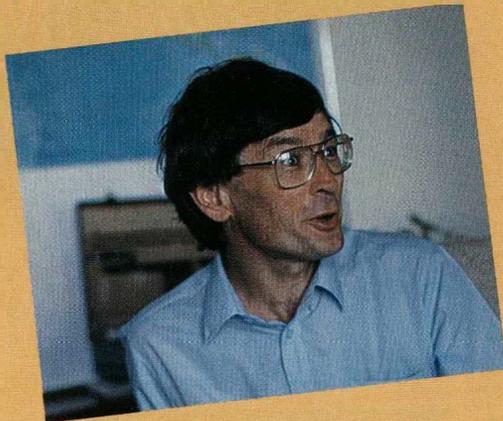
C – stands for COMMUNICATE. Make sure people understand what you're talking about because misunderstandings in life cost a fortune in business and break up marriages.

A – is for ASK. Always ask the advice of others. Ask and copy the success of others. The only way I've been successful is by always asking. Most people I know never ask. They think they know it all. They think it will show them up.

S – is for SIMPLE, keep it simple. Life is very simple, mainly commonsense. So never let anyone overcomplicate anything.

H – is for HONESTY. I think that the only way of being successful in anything is to be honest.

E – is for ENTHUSIASM. Some people are enthusiastic and some people aren't, but I believe enthusiasm is something



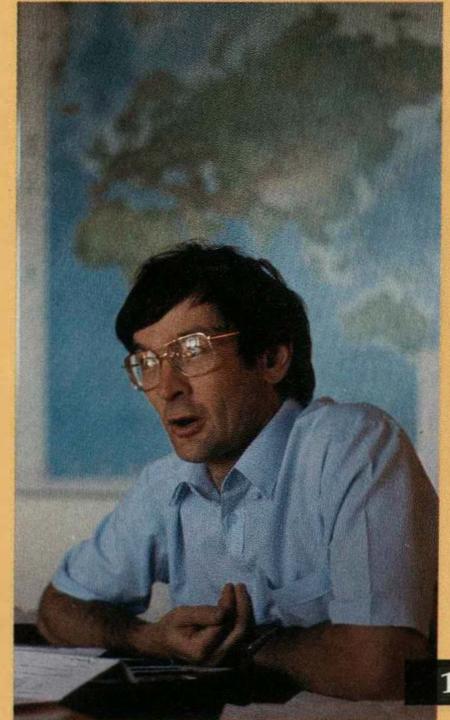
you've got to work on. Sometimes when I'm not enthusiastic, I've got to try and be.

D – is for DISCIPLINE. You've just got to have it.

Discipline is working hard. Nothing replaces hard work.

People tend to be very lazy. I suppose that's fair enough if you want to laze around and not do much, and enjoy yourself. But then people moan and whinge and say that they don't have a lot to do. If you want to be lazy, then you'll bear the results of that laziness. If you want to work hard, you'll get the results of hard work very quickly.

We finished the interview by discussing those people whom Dick Smith felt had helped him most and the companies whose business ideas he'd copied. He was happy to admit that he'd learned from the advice given from other successful people. 'I never had any problems in saying to older people – "Hey! You've probably made every mistake there is to make, can you give me a few suggestions so that I won't make the same mistakes!"'. ■■■



After the interview

Well, I had the interview in the bag – or rather on the tape. What should I do next? Firstly, I *transcribed the tape* in full. You may not wish to do that. You could replay the tape and think about the most interesting way to present the information to your target audience within the time limits or space limits you are allowed.

Secondly, I *summarised the information*. To do this, I went back to my original themes for devising interview questions and, from the transcript of the tape, wrote out Dick Smith's responses to the questions I'd asked. I then edited his responses rather than quoting him verbatim (word for word) so as to get straight to the point of what he was saying. This takes a little time and thought, but is necessary as people often talk differently from the way they would like to be 'read'.

Thirdly, I *presented the information*. Of course, I was lucky. I didn't have to figure out how I'd present the information to other people: it has a place in this book.

However, there are various options you might choose from. These include:

- * making an audio tape
- * making a poster
- * writing a book or a broadsheet
- * presenting a short talk to the class.

I was happy with the interview. Dick Smith's opinions weren't necessarily my own, but I had wanted to hear them anyway. I'd wanted to know what made Dick Smith tick, and the interview had helped me to do that.

I remembered to send off a letter thanking Dick Smith for his time: courtesy costs nothing – well, only a postage stamp!

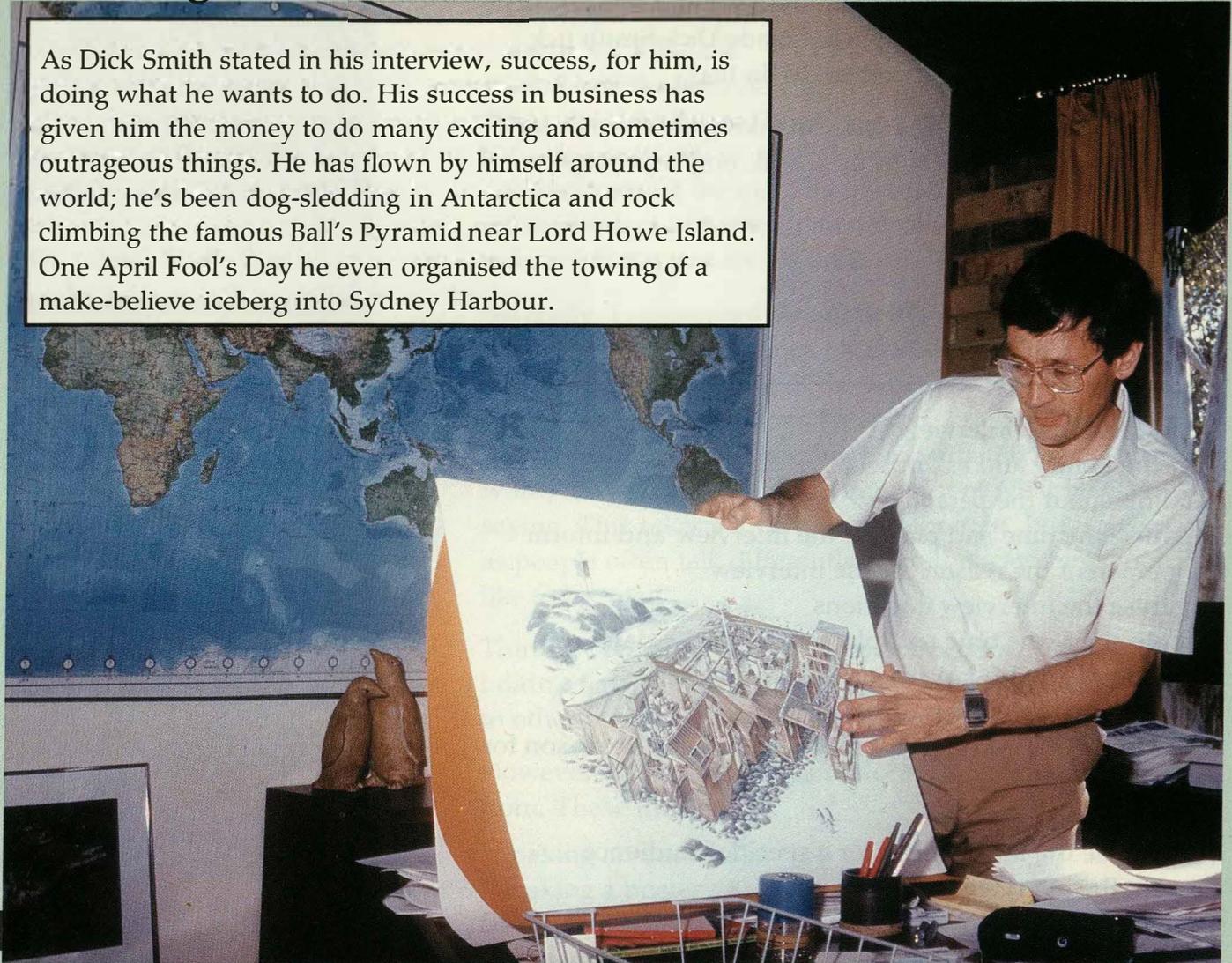
Summary:

The steps of the interview cycle

- Decide whom to interview
- Visit the library and ask others
- Read up about the person
- Organise the time and place of the interview and inform the person of the reason for the interview
- Organise the interview questions
- Double-check the time and place closer to the date
- Organise the audio-tape recorder (tape, batteries)
- Arrive for the interview a few minutes early
- AT THE INTERVIEW: Don't forget to explain the reason for the interview again.
- Transcribe the interview
- Summarise the information for a specified audience
- Present the interview facts
- Thank the person you've interviewed

Retracing Some of Dick Smith's adventures

As Dick Smith stated in his interview, success, for him, is doing what he wants to do. His success in business has given him the money to do many exciting and sometimes outrageous things. He has flown by himself around the world; he's been dog-sledding in Antarctica and rock climbing the famous Ball's Pyramid near Lord Howe Island. One April Fool's Day he even organised the towing of a make-believe iceberg into Sydney Harbour.



Finding the Kookaburra

Dick Smith has a keen interest in the experiences of early aviators. In August 1978 he formed an expedition to search for an aeroplane which had been lost since 1929.

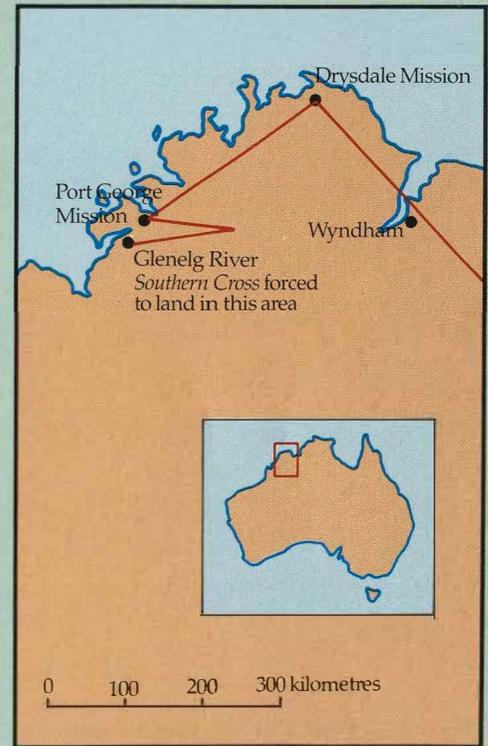
The nineteen-twenties was a decade when many Australian aviators tried to span huge distances to show how useful aeroplanes could be. Bert Hinkler travelled from London to Darwin in 1928 in a record fifteen-and-a-half days. In 1927 Charles Kingsford Smith, and Charles Ulm, flew around Australia in a record 10 days and 5½ hours.

A close colleague of Kingsford Smith, Keith Anderson, with a skilled engineer, Bob Hitchcock, also flew around Australia, but failed to better Kingsford Smith's and Ulm's record. It seems that Keith Anderson, an Australian flier with whom Kingsford Smith had pledged to fly the Pacific, was always ousted at the last minute by Charles Ulm. Kingsford Smith and Charles Ulm, along with two Americans, Harry Lyon and Jim Warner, were first to fly the Pacific in the *Southern Cross*.

On March 30, 1929, Kingsford Smith and Charles Ulm, with H.A. Litchfield as navigator and T.H. McWilliams as radio operator, set off to fly around the world in the *Southern Cross*.

However, the crew of the *Southern Cross* became hopelessly lost in a remote area of the north-west of Western Australia and Keith Anderson and Bob Hitchcock set out to try and find them. Others were involved in the search and rescue

Dick Smith's many ventures have included sponsoring the restoration of huts built by Douglas Mawson's Antarctic Expedition at Commonwealth Bay. (page opposite)

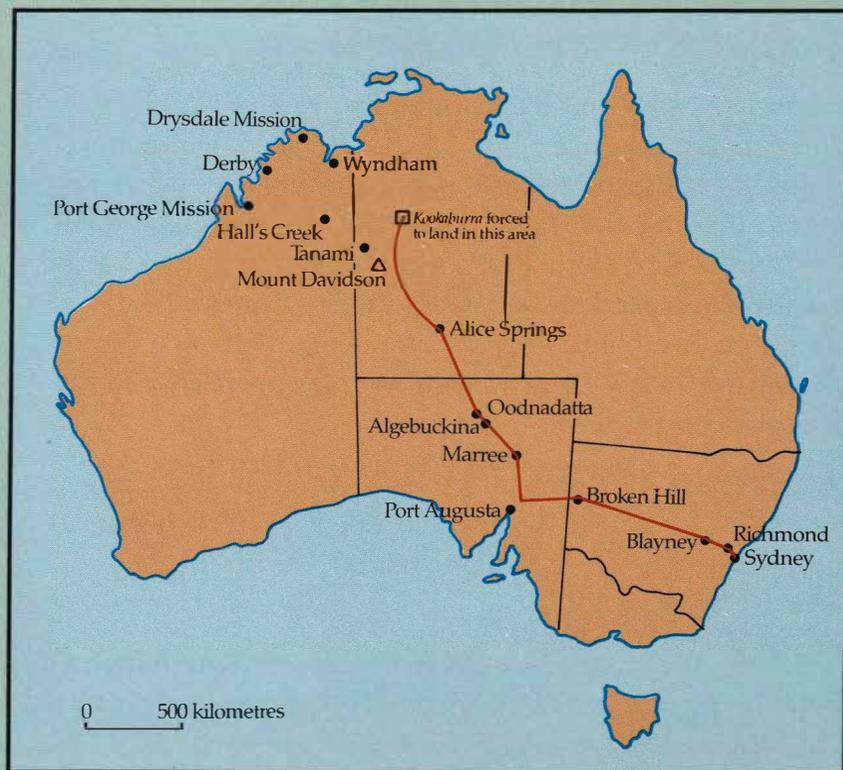


The flight path of the *Southern Cross* and the position of the forced landing

attempt, but Anderson and Hitchcock wanted to find them first.

They left Sydney in a plane called *Kookaburra*, which had a faulty compass and few tools and supplies. *Kookaburra* was overladen with fuel. During the third day of their search, they were forced to make a landing in the Tanami Desert, north of Alice Springs in the Northern Territory, and subsequently died of thirst. The two airmen who'd set out

The route flown by Anderson and Hitchcock in search of the *Southern Cross*, and their forced landing in the Tanami Desert



to find Smithy, Ulm, Litchfield and McWilliams, lost their lives in doing so. The *Southern Cross* crew were later found alive.

Fourteen days after their disappearance, *Kookaburra* and its now dead crew were spotted. The bodies of the airmen were buried and later exhumed and brought back to Sydney (Anderson) and Perth (Hitchcock). However their plane, *Kookaburra*, was not finally relocated until Dick Smith led an expedition to find it in August, 1978.

Dick Smith had wanted to restore *Kookaburra* and display it at Kingsford Smith International Airport in Sydney, but the offer was rejected by the Northern Territory Government.

One positive aspect of the 1929 Government Inquiry into the disappearance of the *Southern Cross* and Anderson's and Hitchcock's deaths in the Tanami Desert showed that Anderson and Hitchcock had not died in vain. As Pedr Davis (1980) states in his book *Kookaburra*.

'An immediate effect of the original inquiry . . . was that compulsory planning of flights was introduced. Certain parts of the country were designated "remote areas" and pilots were permitted to fly over them only when carrying adequate radio equipment. Perhaps the most important outcome of the inquiry was the Federal Government's decision to have proper aeronautical maps made . . . This alone ensured Keith Anderson and Bob Hitchcock a permanent place in Australia's history.'

'Success is doing what you want to do' (Dick Smith)

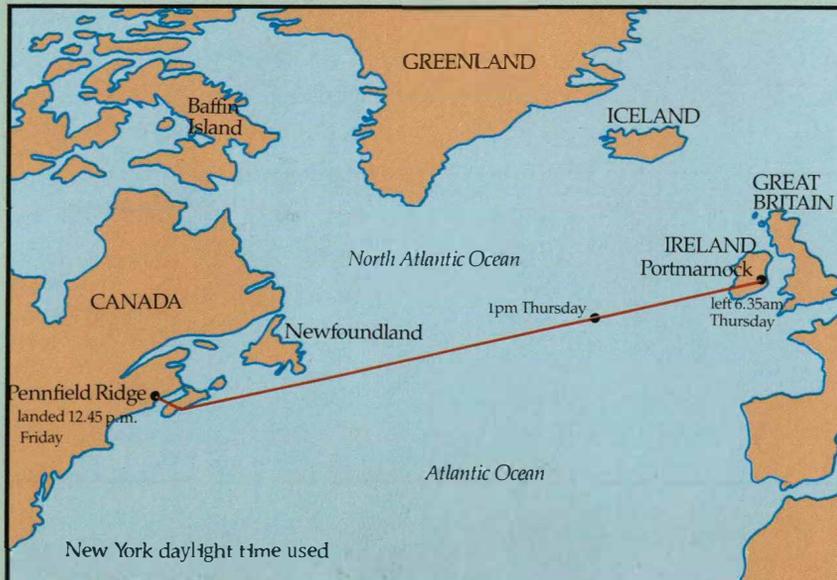
In 1982 Dick Smith made a trip round the world in his helicopter *Delta India Kilo*. He flew solo from Fort Worth in Texas to London and then back home to Australia via Europe, the Middle East and Asia. In doing so, he set some new flight records.

When people asked Dick Smith why he made his solo flight he replied:

'If the helicopter had not been invented I would still have attempted to fly around the world. I have always been a great admirer of the early aviators, the brave men and women who pioneered the air routes which we fly in comfort in jumbo jets today. I am proud to be Australian, and very proud of the significant part played in the development of aviation by Australians, a part out of all proportion to the population of the country at the time. Australia had about five million people when trailblazers like Bert Hinkler, Charles Kingsford-Smith, Charles Ulm, Keith and Ross Smith, Hubert Wilkins, Raymond Parer, Mrs Bonney and others were risking their lives in primitive aeroplanes with minimal navigation equipment. I had read everything I could on their early flights but that did not compensate for the real thing. I wondered what it would be like to follow in their footsteps.' (p. 1 *The Earth Beneath Me*)

He said of James Mollison, the first aviator to fly east to west across the Atlantic Ocean:

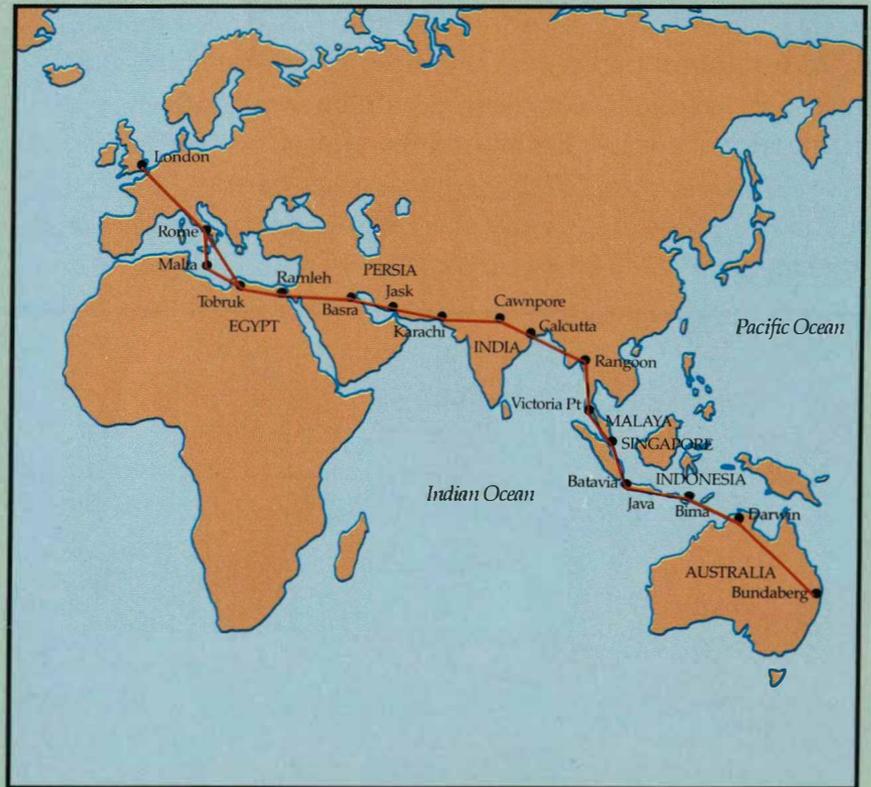
'Flying across the Atlantic alone is a profoundly disturbing experience, even today with the most advanced communications and navigational systems money can buy. There is a great feeling of loneliness over such an immense wilderness of water. Many times on my flight I thought of James Mollison and his solo flight that I was commemorating. Gosh, if he could do it when it was so much harder, I could do it too. The very thought of his achievements was a morale booster. Imagine winging across the Atlantic alone for 30½ hours as he did in 1932, with no friendly voices on the radio to comfort him, no effective weather forecasts and with such primitive navigational equipment that at the end of his trip he had to look for an opening in the fog to land at Pennfield Ridge in Canada. . . Yes, those early fliers were heroes, every one of them.' (p. 90 *The Earth Beneath Me*)



**James Mollison's flight east to west
across the Atlantic**

Whilst flying over Canada's maritime provinces, he said:
'Fliers have proved themselves a crazy bunch before now. One of my personal heroes, an Australian, Sir Hubert Wilkins, was one of the pioneers of Arctic aviation in the 1920s. In 1928, with a co-pilot, and American-born Scandinavian, Ben Eielson, Wilkins flew a little Lockheed Vega mono-plane from Point Barrow on Alaska's most northerly point to Spitzbergen in the Norwegian-owned

Bert Hinkler's flight from England to Australia flying solo in a fixed-wing aircraft



Svalbard Archipelago – 2500 miles literally over the top of the world. What a pity so few Australians know of his exploits.’ (p. 50 *The Earth Beneath Me*)

Dick Smith’s flight from London to Sydney commemorated the flight made by Bert Hinkler in 1928. Hinkler was the first person to fly solo in a fixed-wing aircraft from England to Australia.

Here are some of the comparisons Dick Smith made between his solo helicopter flight, and Hinkler’s fixed-wing flight.

- Dick Smith left England from Biggin Hill airstrip, only 16 kilometres from Hinkler’s departure point at Croydon.
- Dick Smith’s wife, Pip, saw him off from Biggin Hill and said ‘I hope you have good weather and safety, I’ll be thinking of you.’ Bert Hinkler’s wife had said the same words fifty-four years earlier.
- Dick Smith draped a towel over his head to prevent sunburn through the helicopter’s canopy whilst flying from Rome to Athens. Bert Hinkler had worn a pith helmet for part of his flight over India, to prevent sunstroke.
- Dick Smith slept in an air-conditioned hotel when he landed in Cairo. Bert Hinkler slept in the Libyan desert near Tobruk, under the wing of his plane and using his inflatable rubber boat as a mattress.
- On the fourth day of the flight Dick Smith landed at Ha’il in Saudi Arabia. Bert Hinkler, on his fourth day had landed in Palestine to the north-west of Saudi Arabia.

-
- Dick Smith reached Karachi, in Pakistan, a day ahead of Bert Hinkler. Hinkler, by this time had flown for 62 hours and 17 minutes; Smith 42 hours and 4 minutes.
 - Both Dick Smith and Bert Hinkler mentioned the beautiful clouds in the Bay of Bengal en route from Calcutta in India to Rangoon in Burma.
 - In Singapore Bert Hinkler was ordered to land on the local racecourse. Dick Smith landed at Seletar Airfield, Singapore.
 - Both Bert Hinkler and Dick Smith reached Darwin within 15½ days of leaving London. Both landed at Parap, the site of Darwin's original airport in Bert Hinkler's time.
 - After leaving Darwin, both Dick Smith and Bert Hinkler spent a night in the Northern Territory outback beside a bush bore.
 - Dick Smith delivered a London newspaper to the manager of Alexandria Station, as Bert Hinkler had done in 1928.
 - Dick Smith landed at Rankin's Store because Bert Hinkler had stopped there for a cold drink in 1928. However, by 1982, the store was closed and had fallen into disrepair.
 - When Bert Hinkler and Dick Smith landed at Longreach, Qld., Qantas had flown their Brisbane manager in for the welcome, in both cases.
 - Dick Smith landed *Delta India Kilo* exactly where Bert Hinkler's Avro Avian had come to rest, in what was now called Hinkler Park, in Hinkler's home town, Bundaberg.

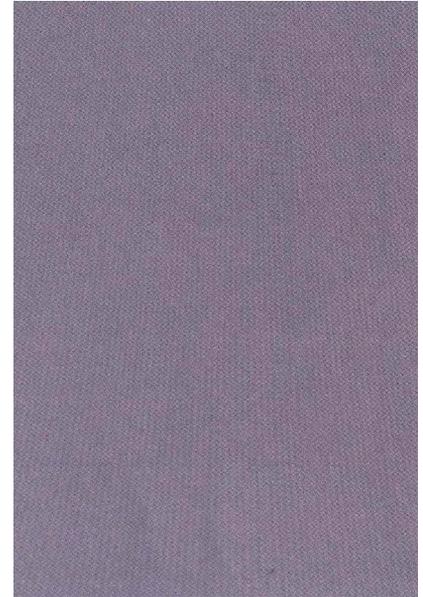
Putting something back into the country

Dick Smith has made a success of his life and now he wants to put something back into the country. One way in which he does this is by helping **Ted Noffs** establish **Life Education Centres**. At these Centres girls and boys learn to understand more about their bodies and why taking drugs can harm them.

Maybe you can find out about local and federal initiatives which help people understand more about drugs in positive ways.



Another of Dick Smith's current interests is the magazine, *Australian Geographic* of which he is publisher and editor-in-chief. I talked with *Australian Geographic's* editor, Howard Whelan, who explained just how the magazine got started.



The offices of the *Australian Geographic* and the Life Education Centre are on the same site at Terrey Hills, N.S.W.



(inset) Howard Whelan, editor of the *Australian Geographic*

The *Australian Geographic*

Like Dick Smith, Howard Whelan is an adventurer. He's been a ski-racer, a journalist and a cinematographer. In fact, in 1984, he helped to film the first Australian climbing expedition up the north face of Mount Everest. Dick Smith invited Howard to help him get the magazine started.

Many of the ideas for stories for *Australian Geographic* have their source in Dick Smith's adventures. Good stories, Howard Whelan says, often turn out to be answers to questions Dick has about Australia, and about interesting things other Australians do.

The magazine aims to help Australians develop a love of Australian flora and fauna. It also wants to provide an opportunity for Australians (and other readers around the world) to share the exciting ventures which other Australians are involved in around the world, as well as in Australia.

Australian Geographic sponsors Australian adventurers, like Sorrel Wilby, the woman who walked across Tibet; the men and women who canoed a remote river in Canada; and John Elcock, the man who wants to cross the Tasman Sea in a rowboat. The magazine also sponsors scientific exploration into the environment in areas such as the Houtman Abrolhos Islands off the coast of Geraldton in Western Australia, or at Coongi Lakes near Innamincka in South Australia. As Howard Whelan says, there are certainly more projects seeking *Australian Geographic's* sponsorship, than can be provided for within the magazine's budget.

Advertising

When an Australian adventurer like Dick Smith foots the bill for a magazine like *Australian Geographic*, says Howard Whelan, you don't have to let advertisers have a say in what goes in the magazine. The magazine doesn't exist to make money. However, advertising generates more revenue for expeditions and environmental research. Therefore, Dick Smith has advertising in *Australian Geographic*, but only at the front and back of the magazine and not within the magazine: and only of those products that Dick Smith uses, or thinks are O.K. As Dick Smith



A designer prepares the 'camera-ready' paste-up of pages of the magazine



Computer terminals in use

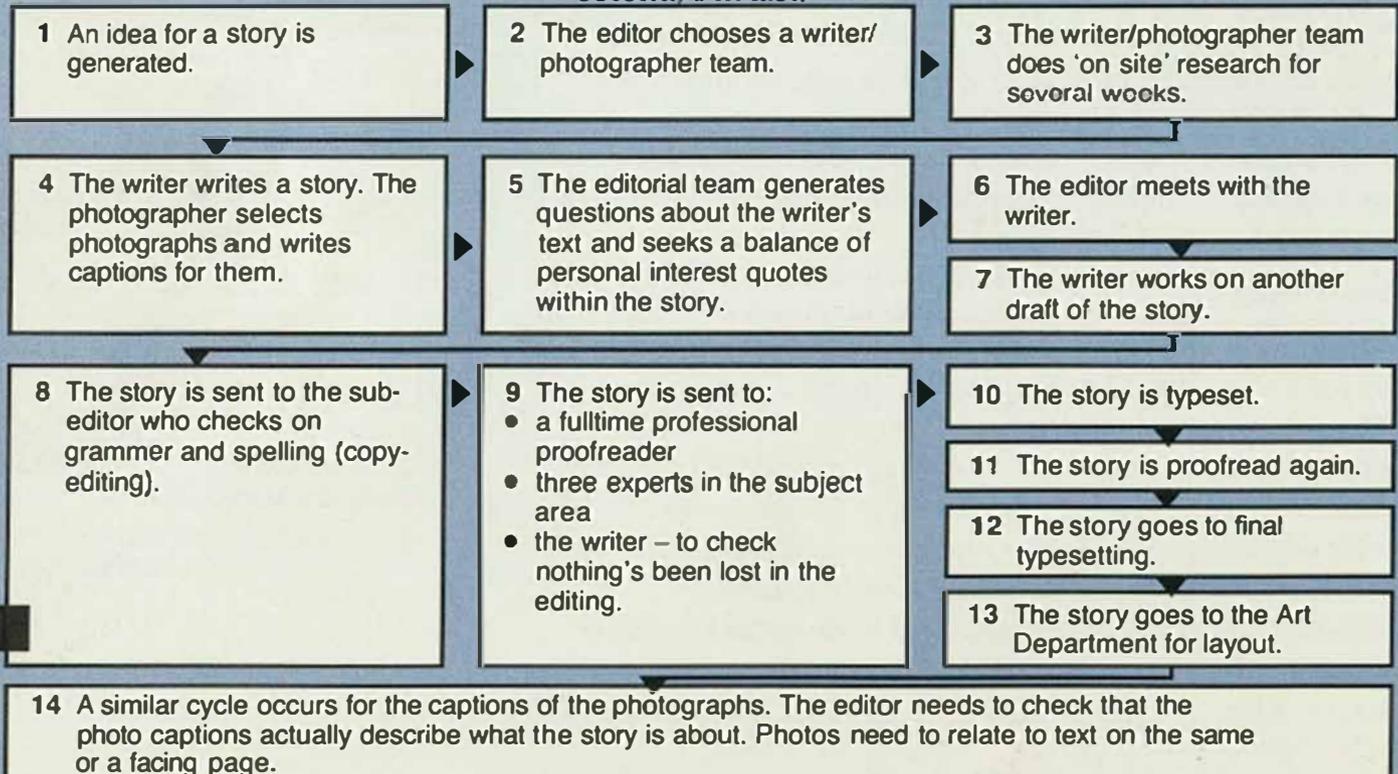
says, if there's a tremendous amount of money being spent to help young people understand the dangers of drugs, then it's a bit silly to advertise cigarettes or alcohol in the magazine.

'I'm only nine years old but I still understand'

Although *Australian Geographic* is written for adults, many children read and enjoy it. Children write letters to Dick Smith about the magazine. One child wrote:

'I'm nine years old but I still understand. Each time Mum goes to the Post Office to get it, I just can't wait. . . I'm not the first one to look through it. Dad is first. Mum is second, I'm last.'

The following diagram shows how a story reaches the pages of *Australian Geographic*.



This process takes about three months, although Howard Whelan is usually working on about fifteen stories at once. Accuracy is extremely important. *Australian Geographic* wants to be known as a magazine which gets it right, all of the time. How would you feel if your classroom writing took this long to be published? Still, I guess you'd be proud to have a story published by *Australian Geographic*. I know I would!

"Our very success depends on our accuracy. We must check everything and never presume."

Dick Smith

A postscript from the author

I've arrived at the end of this book. I've enjoyed the journey: getting to know a lot more about Dick Smith, but also getting to know a lot more about the interview cycle as well.

What does an interview do? Well this interview taught me a lot about Dick Smith. It also raised a lot of questions about other things I wanted to know about Dick Smith's life, his thoughts and his feelings.

That's when I went away and re-read books he'd written. I didn't necessarily *agree* with all Dick Smith had said. But his answers to my questions made me all the more curious. Perhaps this will happen to *you*, too!

Happy interviewing!

E.F.

**This motto is displayed in the
Australian Geographic offices.**

Books by, and about, Dick Smith

Barnier, C. (editor-in-chief) *Notable Australians: The Pictorial Who's Who?* Sydney: Paul Hamlyn, 1978.

Bennett, J. (ed) *The Earth Beneath Me; Dick Smith's Epic Journey Across the World*, Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1983.

Davis, P., *Kookaburra: the most compelling story in Australia's aviation history*, Sydney: Lansdowne Press, 1980.

Deger, D. (ed) *Dick Smith's Getting to Know Personal Computers*, Cammeray: Horwitz Graham, 1982.

Smith, D., *Dick Smith's Australian CB Radio Handbook*, Cammeray: Horwitz Grahame, 1982.

Smith, D., *Dick Smith's Australian Semiconductor Data and Applications Book for the practical engineer and weekend professional*, North Ryde: Dick Smith Management, 1983.

Smith, D. (ed) *Australian Geographic*

Voron, S. & Deger, D. (eds) *Dick Smith's Australian Amateur Radio Handbook*, Cammeray: Horuitz Grahame, 1979.

Voron, S. & Tester, R. (eds) *Dick Smith's Fun Way Into Electronics*, North Ryde: Dick Smith Management, 1979.

Australia has people and places that are quite different from each other and from those found in other parts of the world. More information about Australian people and places may be found in these books.

Going Back in Time (a play) *Maureen Stewart*

Australian Lives *Greg Mitchell*

Red Jack *Mary Durack*

The Castle Hill Uprising *Margaret Pearce*

The Children's Book of Australia *Jan Anderson*

The Death of Ben Hall *Anon.*

Towns of Australia *Jan Anderson*

A note from the author:

So you have to interview someone, do you?

And you don't know where to start?

As it happens, I was asked to interview Dick Smith, the famous Australian adventurer and electronics whizz.

This book tells how I organised the interview, what I found out about Dick Smith and how I used the information I collected.

I hope it will give you some ideas on how to do *your* interview.

I like meeting and talking with people. (In fact that's why I enjoyed writing this book.) I live near the beach, on the edge of a national park near Sydney. I lecture to teacher education students. I enjoy reading (and writing, sometimes!), walking, some sports and keeping my not-so-Scottish terrier, called Hamilton, in check. I hope you can use this book I've written!

Elaine Furniss

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