

The Research Centre of the School of Economics and Business in cooperation with the
Bank of Slovenia
cordially invites you to a research seminar
on **Thursday, 25 September 2025, at 13:00 CET in room D-122**
at the School of Economics and Business

David Gilchrist (University of Western Australia)

will present the article:

**N. G. Butlin's 1959 Monograph "Colonial Socialism in Australia" and the Discourse
in Economic History**

In 1959, an edited volume entitled *The State and Economic Growth* was published. It consisted of papers presented at a 1956 conference related to the same topic. Of interest here was the inclusion of N. G. Butlin's paper entitled "Colonial Socialism in Australia". The existence of colonial socialism in Australia has never been in doubt; nor has its importance to the development of the Australian economy ever been seriously questioned. What has been the subject of considerable contention has been the questions pertaining to what caused colonial socialism to be established in Australian colonies during a period of pronounced liberal thinking and what effects (good and bad) did the existence of colonial socialism have on Australian economic development generally and the development of private enterprise particularly? In this paper I review the position established by Butlin in his 1959 contribution and explore the subsequent discussion it generated both in terms of refinement and refutation. In doing so, I concentrate my discussion by reviewing the areas of employment, finance sourcing and railway investment in the context of the effects this activity had on the capacity of the private sector to develop in such an environment.

We look forward to welcoming you at the seminar.