

2012 AARES Distinguished Fellow

Jack A. Sinden



Emeritus Professor, Faculty of The Professions, UNE Business School

Jack migrated to Australia to take up a position at the Forest Research Institute in Canberra in 1965 upon completion of his PhD in forestry economics at the University of Wales. By 1997 the lure of the University of New England had taken effect and Jack applied for a lectureship there. His application was successful. UNE proved to be such an attractive work place that Jack remained employed there for 44 years, retiring only last year.

Occasional absences from Armidale involved visiting appointments at the Universities of Oregon and Arizona in the USA and Faisalabad University in Pakistan. His two periods of study leave spent at Yale University were particularly fruitful as it was there that Jack met his wife Marly in 1973.

Jack's contribution to the profession has been outstanding in two dimensions. First, his research work produced a suite of outputs including four books and 86 papers in refereed journals. In the course of his research, Jack was instrumental in bringing environmental issues into the purview of the economics profession in Australia. This came about fundamentally through Jack's long held interest in benefit-cost analysis together with his association with fellow forest economist Professor A C Worrell. It was through that association and two visits to Yale that Sinden and Worrell "Unpriced values: decisions without market prices" was published in 1979. This was a path breaking book not only in Australia but internationally as it pioneered thinking on methods that could be used to integrate environmental impacts into benefit cost analysis. Throughout his career thereafter, Jack maintained a keen interest in the development and application of non-market environmental valuation techniques. His interest in benefit cost analysis also continued and culminated in the publication of his introductory text on that topic, co-authored with Professor Dodo Thampapillai.

The second dimension of Jack's outstanding contribution to the profession has been through his teaching. Over the course of his 44 years at UNE, Jack has commanded the respect of countless students in agricultural and resource economics and natural resource management. His influence has been profound in providing solid conceptual foundations as well as the inspiration to push the boundaries of theory and practice. His skills in explaining complexities to his undergraduate classes are renowned. And those fortunate to have been supervised by Jack in their research dissertations have benefited from his intellectual strength, good sense and good humour. He remains a mentor to many.