

## **Award of Distinguished Fellow of the Society to Dr Robin Johnson**



The AARES committee is pleased to announce the awarding of the first ever Distinguished Fellow of the Society award to Dr Robin Johnson. Robin has made a significant contribution to the agricultural economics discipline in Australia and New Zealand, as well as to the AARES as a professional society, and as such is a worthy recipient of this reward.

Robin was born in New Zealand in 1927, and graduated with a Bachelor of Agricultural Science degree from Lincoln College, New Zealand in 1952. He then completed a Masters degree from Massey University, New Zealand in 1953, a Bachelor of Letters from Oxford University, England in 1957, and went on to complete a PhD at the University of London in 1968.

His working career began in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), first as a research officer in the UK Colonial Office, and then as a Lecturer in economics at the University of Rhodesia. On his return to New Zealand he was appointed Deputy Director of the Agricultural Economics Research Unit at Lincoln College, a post he held for six years. Following a short stint lecturing at the University of Wollongong, New South Wales, he took up the position of Assistant Director, Economics Division, at the New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. This was followed by a one-year posting as Agricultural Advisor to the Prime Minister in 1980, before

moving back to MAF as Deputy Director Economics Division until 1985. He then served as a Research Fellow at the Centre for Policy Studies at Massey University for a three-year period before again returning to MAF in 1989 as a Senior Policy Consultant attached to the Rural Resources Group. He retired in 1993.

Robin has participated in a number of FAO assignments. In Rhodesia in 1961, to provide advice on the economics of African agriculture and appropriate national accounting concepts; in the Philippines in 1983, to participate in a regional seminar on Fertiliser Price Policies and Subsidies; and in Pakistan in 1984, as a member of a team to draw up an agricultural research plan for the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council. He also participated in an Asia-Pacific Development Institute Rural Credit seminar for Island Nationals in Fiji in 1979. Robin represented New Zealand at FAO conferences in 1973, 1975, 1977, 1981, and 1985, as well as representing New Zealand on the OECD Agricultural Committee in 1973, 1975, 1977, and 1981. He has also presented a number of papers to the World Conference of Agricultural Economists. In 1986 in Sydney, he presented a paper on Economic Models for Peasant Farming, in 1971 in Russia he presented a paper on Evaluating Science Planning, in 1976 in Kenya he presented a commentary on a paper on Agricultural policy, in 1979 in Canada he presented a paper on National Planning in Agriculture, and in 1994 in Zimbabwe he presented a commentary on a Plenary Development paper. He has written and presented a total of 54 papers covering production economics, resource economics, development economics and agricultural policy. He has also edited numerous books and reports.

Robin served on the inaugural committee of the New Zealand Branch of the AAES in 1976, and was President of the Branch from 1978 until 1984. He has also been a member of the Management Committee on many occasions, the last being in 1992–93. In 1993–94 he became President of AAES, the first New Zealander to hold this position and also took responsibility for hosting the AAES Conference in Wellington, New Zealand, in the same year. Simultaneously, he was appointed editor of the *Review of Marketing and Agricultural Economics*, and served in that capacity for four years, completing his tenure at the end of 1996. In 1990 he was presented with the New Zealand 1990 Commemoration Medal, for service to the agricultural industry, and in 1996 was awarded the first ever NZARES Life Membership.

During his professional career, Robin brought an intellectual rigour both to his own work, and to the editorship of the RMAE, as well as being a role model and mentor for many members of AARES and NZARES. He has been very forthcoming in providing perceptive and constructive feedback on papers presented at AARES/NZARES conferences and on committee matters, again

for both AARES and NZARES. He has made a considerable contribution to the development and understanding of agricultural economics in Australia and New Zealand, particularly with respect to public policy development. At the same time Robin has also made a significant contribution to the development of both AARES and NZARES.

The AARES Committee feel that Robin is a very worthy recipient of the Distinguished Fellow of the Society award and would like to send their congratulations to Robin. The award will be presented at the 1999 Annual Conference.