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2010 AARES Distinguished Fellow

James C. McColl



Jim McColl is currently Visiting Fellow, Natural Resource Economics and Decision Sciences Group, CSIRO Ecosystem Sciences. Initially graduating in agricultural science from the University of Melbourne in 1956, he later obtained a master's degree specialising in agricultural economics. He has held senior positions in numerous government departments and agencies responsible for managing the agricultural and fisheries industries. These included Director of Agriculture and Fisheries and Director General of Agriculture, South Australia (1976–1985); Commissioner, Industries Commission (now Productivity Commission) (1985–1988); Chairman, Australian Fisheries Management Authority (1992–2000); and Presiding Member, South Australian River Murray Catchment Water Management Board (1998–2001).

In his early years, he practised as a private farm management consultant in the irrigation areas of northern Victoria and southern NSW, following a period as an irrigation research and extension officer with the Victorian Department of Agriculture. Subsequently, he engaged in consultancy work

for a range of organisations, including the Commonwealth, South Australian and Northern Territory Governments, the Murray-Darling Basin Commission, and various Research and Development Corporations and Cooperative Research Centres.

A major involvement over the last 30 years has been with several important agricultural policy inquiries and reviews, including the Review of Agricultural Policy by the Balderstone Committee (1981–1982), and a number of Industries Commission inquiries (1982–1994). In 1986, he was appointed Royal Commissioner into the Grain Storage, Handling and Transport System in Australia (1986–1988). In 1990, he chaired the Review of Agricultural and Related Education (Higher Education), and in 1997, he chaired the Review of the Rural Adjustment Scheme, both for the Commonwealth Government.

Since joining the Policy and Economics Unit, CSIRO Land and Water, in 2001, he has been author or co-author of numerous reports, articles and book chapters, most recently in the area of water policy and economics. In 2005, he was awarded the Eureka Prize for water research jointly with Mike Young. In 2006, he received a Centenary Medal for Agriculture from the University of Melbourne and in 2010, an Australian Medal of Agricultural Science from the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science and Technology.