We wish to nominate Emeritus Professor Jim Walmsley (Jim hereafter) for the Institute of Australian Geographers Inc. Griffith Taylor Award. In our opinion, Jim has made a distinguished contribution to geography in Australia in his capacities as a researcher of international renown, a gifted and innovative teacher of geography, and for his unstinting service to the discipline across a wide range of fields.

In terms of research, Jim’s work has centred on the interaction between people and the environment. He is a nationally and internationally-recognised pioneer in the field of “behavioural geography”. A central thesis of much of his work is that the real world is too vast and complex for people to understand in its entirety. In order to cope with this situation of information overload, people develop simplified mental images of reality and then behave in relation to these images rather than reality itself. Jim has investigated the nature of such environmental imagery in a wide variety of fields, notably migration, consumer behaviour, and tourism. Two of his books (*People and Environment*, Longman, 1993 (with Gareth Lewis) and *Urban Living*, Longman, 1988) are leading texts in behavioural geography, and in the philosophy of the discipline generally. Jim has published, to date, 20 books/monographs and 108 journal articles/book chapters.

More specifically, Jim’s work has been largely concerned with reconceptualising tourism as a core human activity. Here the focus has been on leisure, recreation and tourism as a continuum of activity rather than as discrete phenomena. His argument is that this continuum needs to be viewed within the context of human mobility more generally. In this way, tourism can be seen to be part of the same phenomenon as short-term migration. This innovative reconceptualisation is important because it correlates with the shift in society generally from a focus on production to a focus on consumption. Central to Jim’s thesis is the notion that society is becoming lifestyle-led rather than class-driven, with leisure-orientated lifestyles assuming greater importance. This has led to recent insights into the way in which suburban shopping in Australia is being restructured in a way that can be explained by lifestyle changes.

Jim has always seen geography as an applied social science. This perspective is evidenced in the special attention he has paid to the planning and policy implications of his research. In this regard, one of his major interests has been in regional development, particularly in rural areas of Australia. From the mid-1990s onwards, he has provided distinguished leadership in his chosen research fields. For instance, he was Chair of the Steering Committee for an Academy of the Social Sciences workshop on sustainable rural communities which more fully developed the popular ‘capitals’ framework in the context of rural Australian communities. He was team leader on a major research consultancy from the (then) Department of Immigration & Multicultural Affairs for a $200,000 study of the social costs and benefits of immigration in Australia. He has led, or been integrally involved in, a number of ARC Discovery projects, exploring, for example, the ‘community without propinquity’ thesis (UNE), the way some Australian rural centres are redefining themselves through the promotion of festivals (UoW), internal migration in Australia (ASSA/UQ), and change within
Australia’s rural heartlands (Latrobe). He is currently engaged in an ARC Discovery project examining youth migration in rural Australia and the implications of this for workforce planning and training provision. He is also a Chief Investigator on an ARC Linkage project looking at the way in which regional development can be leveraged from cultural activities in non-metropolitan Australia. The outstanding character of Jim’s research contribution led to his election to a Fellowship of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia in 1994 and, in the same year, election as a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society.

Jim’s name is synonymous with geography at University of New England, where he first began his post-doctoral academic career in 1972. During that time, he has been an enthusiastic and talented teacher and a dedicated postgraduate supervisor. He has always carried amongst the heaviest teaching loads yet maintained his enthusiasm for his students and for teaching geography in general. With Professor John Humphreys (now of Monash University), he was the winner of the Inaugural Vice-Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Team Teaching in 1996. Jim served with distinction as Professor of Geography and Planning at UNE for almost seventeen years, following his appointment to that position in 1993. He played a major role in the introduction of urban and regional planning as a degree to the Department’s offerings, thereby helping underpin its long-term viability. He was also very active in Faculty and University level committees. In short, Jim made a major contribution to UNE during his 38 years on staff.

Jim has been a long-standing and indefatigable servant of geography, and the same could be said of his undying support of his beloved Preston-North End soccer team. Throughout his career he has acted as a reviewer, referee and assessor for over 40 research organisations, publishing houses and journals and has been a Masters and PhD thesis examiner at 14 universities. He has also served as a Joint Editor of *Australian Geographical Studies* (now *Geographical Research*). He is currently on the Editorial Board of the Australian Geographer and has served terms on the editorial boards of the international journals, *Geoforum* and *Space and Polity*. With regard to the IAG, he served as Vice-President from mid-2004 for two years before assuming the Presidency from mid-2006 to mid-2008. During this period Jim played a pivotal role in negotiating with the then Federal Government over geography’s inclusion in the national curriculum. The eventual success of that initiative owes much to Jim’s determination and diplomatic skills, together with, of course, his passion for geography. His term as Outgoing President concluded mid-2010. He continued on the Council of the Institute as outgoing Vice-President. He was also a member of the National Committee for Geography (under the auspices of the Academy of the Sciences).

To us, Jim’s contribution to the discipline over nearly four decades – encompassing his ground-breaking research, his teaching practice and contributions to geography pedagogy, and his service to the IAG – more than meets the criteria set for this prestigious award.

**Proposers:**

Assoc. Prof. Neil Argent  
Prof. Chris Gibson

**Seconded:**

Prof. John Connell  
Adjunct Prof. Tony Sorensen