

ECONOMIC SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA AWARDS 2016 DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC POLICY FELLOW AWARD

Nominee: Professor Ian Harper

Nominated by: Paul Oslington (Vice President Academic)

Seconded by: Richard Tooth (President)



Professor Ian Harper B.Ec(Hons) (Qld) M.Ec. Ph.D.(ANU) FASSA FAICD

The NSW Branch of the Economic Society of Australia nominates Professor Ian Harper as Economic Society of Australia Distinguished Public Policy Fellow.

Ian Harper is one of Australia's best known economists. More importantly for an Economic Society of Australia Distinguished Public Policy Fellow used his considerable talents in the service of good public policy, initially in the area of his research specialisation financial economics as a key member of the 1996 Wallis Committee of Inquiry into the Financial System which contributed to

Australia's enviably robust financial regulatory framework. Later he took up the politically charged role of Inaugural Chairman of the Australian Fair Pay Commission from 2005-9, tasked with setting the Federal Minimum Wage. He commissioned new research to provide an evidence base for the Commission's decisions and led notably wide ranging public consultations which went a long way for winning community confidence in the minimum wage setting process. Ian's courage and commitment to good applied economics was also evident in his appointment to Independent Review of State Finances established by the Victorian Government in 2011 and a report that though not made public was the basis of many reforms. Recently he has chaired the Government's Competition Policy Review, a "root and branch" review of Australia's competition policy, laws and regulators. Characteristically he wrote an engaging and accessible article for the AFR the day his appointment was announced, explaining the principles and benefits of competition policy, and encouraging submissions. His report released has provoked vigorous debate, especially over the extension to new areas of human services, and will advance competition policy in Australia.

Ian is one of those rare economists who can cross over between the academic, commercial and public policy worlds. An economist who has made a difference to public policy in a number of areas.

In the NSW Branch we have particularly appreciated Ian's willingness to mentor young economists, and encourage the next generation of public policy makers. At a recent mentoring lunch for our young economists he urged the value and honour of applied and policy economics – that our best and brightest should consider this as well as academic research. We know he has been an active mentor and advocate for a publicly engaged economics in his home state of Victoria.

Ian is currently a partner of Deloitte Access Economics, and a Professorial Fellow at University of Melbourne. Originally from Queensland, he earned his MEd and PhD in economics from ANU, served with the Reserve Bank of Australia and has been a Fulbright Fellow to Princeton University. He was elected a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia in 2000.