

JACK GORDON BEALE

CITATION FOR AN HONORARY DEGREE

Mr Chancellor, it is my privilege to present to you for a degree of the University, the Honourable Jack Gordon Beale.

Jack Beale has made many outstanding contributions, not only to Australian society, science and technology, resource development, environmental management and culture, but also to societies elsewhere in the world over his long and illustrious career. These contributions, made as a distinguished consulting engineer, a member of parliament, a Minister in the NSW government, and as an enterprising company director, have been characterised by innovation, creativeness, energy and vision.

Jack Beale's professional qualifications are in mechanical, electrical, civil, agricultural and biological systems engineering. He has worked as a consulting engineer in more than 60 countries over a period of 56 years. His work on water conservation and agricultural engineering in India from 1952 to 1959 was credited by India's former Prime Minister, Pandit Nehru, as saving millions of people from famine through the concept of 'drought proofing'. A concept which he also applied in Australia, leading to the expansion of the irrigation industry and the establishment of the first privately owned network of hydropower generators, which is currently reducing Australian greenhouse emissions by 170,000 tonnes a year.

Following his election as the Member for the South Coast in 1942, Jack Beale became one of the youngest Members to be elected to the NSW Legislative Assembly. He was a tireless worker for increased employment and economic opportunities for the South Coast. He initiated in 1972 the first truly integrated, interdisciplinary resource survey, with emphasis on human activities, in Australia; the study with CSIRO of the Clyde River Valley.

He served with distinction as NSW Minister for Conservation from 1965 to 1971. From 1971-1973 he was the first Minister for the Environment anywhere in Australia, and was also Minister assisting the Premier and Treasurer. As Minister for Conservation, he administered the largest ever resources construction program in NSW. His Ministerial roles were characterised by innovations in environmental management. For example, he commissioned the River Catchment Studies which collected, for the first time, resource data on 32 major river catchments in NSW. He introduced systematic charging for irrigation water and was responsible for the first specific allocations of water to the environment in the Macquarie Marshes, 25 years before environmental flows became fashionable. He was one of the few Ministers for water resources anywhere in the world who was capable of designing, building and operating the dams and related works for which he was responsible.

The NSW legislation relating to Clean Air, Clean Water, Waste Disposal, Pollution Control, Soil and Forest Conservation, and the National Parks and Wildlife Service were all initiated by Jack Beale. These were pioneering in Australia. He formulated the first guidelines for environmental impact statements in the world in 1971.

Nationally, Jack Beale was an outspoken champion and foremost advocate of the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme. He was instrumental in establishing the Australian Water Resources Council, the Australian Forestry Council, the National Flood Mitigation Scheme, the National Soil Conservation Program, the National Conifer Planting Program, the National Water Resources Development Program and the Australian Environment Council. Jack Beale served with distinction on the Commonwealth/ State Ministerial Councils for Water Resources, Forestry, and Agriculture between 1965 and 1971, and for the Environment from 1971 to 1973.

Internationally, Jack Beale was from 1974 until 1977 a senior, part-time adviser to the United Nations Environment Program and also to its Environment Program. He undertook some of the first United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) Advisory Missions to help many countries especially developing countries, such as Thailand, Venezuela, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka, with national environmental institution building. Jack Beale was a ranking Australian delegate to the Water for Peace Conference held in Washington in 1967 and to the United Nations' Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972.

Jack Beale's motto throughout his long professional career has been 'today's research is tomorrow's practice'. He has been an initiator, champion and active supporter of water and related resources research in Australia. He initiated the Water Research Foundation of Australia, in 1955, and has been its executive chairman since that time. The Foundation was the first, and remains the only, non-government, non-profit, wholly community-based Research Institute that searches for solutions to Australia's critical and unique water and related land resources problems. The Foundation has funded more than 300 research projects. Jack Beale was instrumental in establishing the Jack Beale Chair of Water Resources at this University in 1989 and, through the Foundation, initiated the Annual Jack Beale Water Resources Lecture in 1990 as part of the ANU Public Lecture Series.

Time does not permit to detail Jack Beale's many other, noteworthy contributions to the community. Jack Beale is an Australian visionary, who has had the dedication, courage and energy to bring his visions to fruition, to the benefit of Australia. Jack Beale's detailed understanding of the unique Australian environment, his policy and project initiatives, aimed at providing resource security and livelihoods for Australians, while protecting that environment, and his unabated support for the research necessary to use those resources wisely, are exemplary.

Mr Chancellor, it is with great pleasure that I present to you Jack Gordon Beale, that you may confer on him the Degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, on the ground of his distinguished creative contributions in the service of society.

Professor H A Nix
Director
Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies
The Australian National University
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