

ECONOMIC THEORY, APPLICATIONS AND ISSUES

Working Paper No. 62

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Tourism Economics: Clem Tisdell's Journey**

by

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Economics: Clem Tisdell's Journey^{*}**

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The Excitement and Value of Discovering Tourism Economics: Clem Tisdell's Journey

ABSTRACT

Outlines how Clem Tisdell came to discover tourism economics and charts the basic route that he followed in developing that interest. This article is developed by first considering his early years (1939 to 1960), that is the period prior to his commencement of postgraduate studies at the Australian National University, then his postgraduate studies at the Australian National University (1961-1963), and his lecturing appointment at this university in the period 1964-1972. It was towards the end of this period that his research interests started to change significantly and provided a springboard for his later focus on tourism economics and the environment. It was during his appointment as Professor of Economics at the University of Newcastle (1972-1989) that his interest in tourism economics 'took-off' and gathered momentum thanks initially to a research grant from the ASEAN-Australian Joint Research Project in 1982. His interest in this subject continued strongly after he joined The University of Queensland in 1989 and benefited from several research grants, including some from the CRC for Sustainable Tourism. He was appointed Professor Emeritus in this university in 2005 and continues to pursue his interest in tourism economics. Tisdell explains why he has found this interest to be exciting and of value.

Keywords: China, ecological economics, economic development, environmental economics, India, nature-based tourism, sustainable tourism, tourism economics, wildlife conservation.

JEL Classification: F18, L83, O10, Q5.

The Excitement and Value of Discovering Tourism Economics: Clem Tisdell's Journey

Biographical Note

Clement Allan Tisdell (c.tisdell@economics.uq.edu.au) joined The University of Queensland in 1989 as Professor of Economics and since the beginning of 2005 has been Professor Emeritus there. He was Professor of Economics at the University of Newcastle (New South Wales) from 1972 to 1989 and before that he was at the Australian National University in Canberra from 1961-1972 where he completed his Ph.D. in Economics, joined the academic staff and was then rapidly promoted to the position of Reader in Economics. Clem Tisdell has been fortunate to visit many overseas countries, universities and institutions during his career and has forged diverse cooperative academic ties. His range of research interests is broad and he is a prolific author. He has been assessed (May 2010) by his IDEAS profile as being one of the world's leading economic researchers. The seeds of his discovery of tourism economics were probably sown in 1970 but his interest in the subject developed slowly and intermittently at first. However, by 1984 Tisdell's interest in tourism economics became firmly established and still continues.

1. Introduction

In outlining the way in which I came to discover tourism economics and to develop my research on it, I'll do so chronologically. Then I'll discuss why it excites me and the value I have obtained from my journey. I'll focus on my development that relates primarily to tourism economics rather than attempt an overall autobiography as some contributors to this series have done. Further information of a biographical nature is available in Dollery and Wallis (1996), Tisdell (1997) and Lodewijks (2007) plus references in the article as well as from the following websites:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clem_Tisdell

http://www.uq.edu.au/economics/PDF/staff/Clem_Tisdell_CV.pdf

http://www.search.com/reference/Clem_Tisdell

<http://www.uq.edu.au/economics/index.html?page=15911>

I have no idea who contributed the material for *Wikipedia*, and why, nor do I know who completed the item on the search website. Another pertinent reference is Tisdell (2007a) which attempts to classify and outline the way in which my published books evolved.

I began by providing some background on my journey up until the end of 1960 (the completion of my undergraduate degree) and next I cover my relevant experiences at the Australian National University (the period 1961-1972). It was towards the end of my stay at the Australian National University that the seeds of my interest in tourism economics were sown. This interest sprouted after I joined the University of Newcastle in the Hunter Valley of New South Wales. I was there in the period 1972-1989 and it was in the 1980s that my interest in tourism economics became firmly established. It continued to flourish and was boosted after I joined The University of Queensland in 1989. After outlining these stages in my development, I discuss the excitement and value I feel I have derived from exploring tourism economics and then conclude.

2. My Early Years (1939-1960): The Period Prior to my Postgraduate Studies.

I was born on November 18, 1939 in the country town of Taree in New South Wales, Australia. I was to be the eldest of ten children; an equal number of boys and girls. Given my socio-economic background, it was statistically highly unlikely that I would ever go to University, let alone write about tourism economics. I was officially given the name of 'Clement' but I always thought it was 'Clem' until I had to obtain copies of my birth certificate in order to apply in 1956 for a Teacher's College Scholarship of the NSW Department of Education. In my earlier years I always used 'Clem' as part of my *nomme de plume* but as I have grown older I have increased the frequency with which I use 'Clement'.

I completed all my schooling at Taree Public School, which, in fact, was a state school of the NSW Department of Education. For me it was a positive experience. I liked learning and my teachers were supportive of my efforts. I was encouraged to explore, to be constructively critical and to back up my work with references and evidence. For me

these traits turned out to be a life-long asset. My experience also resulted in my placing a very high social value on education. I became supportive of well designed state-sponsored educational systems and of access to free education in schools for all, as well as the provision of financial support for students pursuing tertiary education, especially of those likely to perform well at tertiary level. Hence, I tend to favour support of intellectual meritocracy in relation to tertiary education because, in my view, it is likely to be a form of inequality advantageous to all. It would therefore, satisfy Rawls principle of justice (Rawls, 1971). Rawls argued in favour of equality of income except for income inequality that can be expected to be advantageous to all in society.

The schoolteachers who influenced me most made me aware of the social and intellectual dangers of dogmatism and of jingoism. They also pointed out that rote learning and the repetition of ideas would stifle innovation and consequently, intellectual and economic progress. One of my history teachers suggested that China lost its global leadership in relation to intellectual advance and scientific and technological progress for several centuries due to its development of an intellectual culture (which he associated with Confucianism) that was not supportive of new ideas and innovation. While this may or may not be the major cause in this specific case, I am firmly convinced of the importance of academic institutions fostering innovatory attitudes and the quest for new ideas by students.

I worry that many Western universities today are in danger of losing their earlier emphasis on making students think (Tisdell, 2000a). Modern teaching techniques, large classes, excessive reliance on text books and use of teacher evaluation procedures and scores discourage students and many of their teachers from searching for new ideas (see Alauddin and Tisdell, forthcoming). In economics, this tends to be reinforced by the mechanical application of mathematical and econometric techniques. These techniques all too often become a substitute for in depth assessment. I believe that the academic philosophy imparted to me by my teachers motivated me strongly to explore new fields in economics, including tourism economics.

My final year at Taree Public School was 1956. For me, this was a crucial year. I wanted to go on to tertiary studies but knew that that would be impossible without an adequate scholarship - whether I would win such a scholarship depended on my final examination grades. I was fortunate to be awarded two scholarships: one to study law at Sydney University and the other from the NSW Department of Education to complete a degree to teach in secondary schools. I accepted the latter because it paid both university enrolment fees and a living-away-from-home allowance whereas the former did not pay more than university enrolment fees. I enrolled in the University of New South Wales and attended its Newcastle University College campus in the Hunter Valley, to study for a Bachelor of Commerce in Economics. Eventually I obtained this degree with First Class Honours and the University Medal.

My lecturers had been trained in the British academic tradition – they had either completed their education in Britain or in Australia, which then clearly followed existing British traditions. There was considerable emphasis on reading (very limited use of text books), presentation of seminars by students, and on essays displaying critical abilities. None of my classes touched on tourism but much that I learnt was later to prove valuable in my discovery and exploration of tourism economics. Since my university student years, Australian universities have become increasingly attuned to academic practices in the United States, which may have also brought about major changes in the way British universities operate. In my view, a new academic culture is developing that could retard intellectual progress.

3. Postgraduate Studies at the Australian National University (1961-1963)

My final year at Newcastle University College was 1960. I was encouraged by my lecturers, especially Professor Warren Hogan, to apply for postgraduate scholarships. I was successful – won a scholarship for Harvard to cover fees, a scholarship and fellowship for the University of Pennsylvania, and a scholarship of the Australian National University. The latter was financially attractive and I did not look forward to further coursework which would be required if I went to America. So I went to Canberra

and submitted my Ph.D. thesis in economics in 1963. Professor Fred Gruen and Trevor Swan jointly supervised my research for my Ph.D.

My Ph.D. thesis was relatively theoretical and was published in 1968 by Princeton University Press (Tisdell, 1968). There was nothing in it about tourism. However, in 1984, I did publish a tourism-relevant article (Tisdell, 1984b) that drew on some of the theoretical ideas in this thesis and which was reprinted with some minor changes in Tisdell (2001). The content of my Ph.D. thesis was quite original and was underpinned by some philosophical discourse. Yet, I did not depart too much from the use of a standard economic framework. Several articles based on it (or an extension of this research) were published in leading academic journals and the philosopher Jon Elster took note of my contribution comparing one of my viewpoints about decision-making with that of Descartes (Elster, 1979, pp. 60-61). I only learnt about that in the early 1990s when a colleague at The University of Queensland brought it to my attention. Naturally, I was rather pleased. The rationality and decision-making of tourists is receiving increased attention in my more recent research on tourism (see later).

4. Lecturing in Economics at the Australian National University (1964-1972, except 1965)

I began lecturing in microeconomics in 1964 at the Australian National University and continued to do so (except in 1965) until mid-1972 when I took up a position as Professor of Economics at Newcastle University in New South Wales. In 1965, I travelled around the world as a result of being awarded a Postdoctoral Scholarship of the Australian National University. The award was for one year, paid my air fare and provided an adequate living allowance. This was my first experience of international travel.

I spent the major portion of 1965 at Princeton University as a Visiting Fellow and a shorter period at Stamford University. In Princeton, my main contacts were Professor William Baumol and Professor Oskar Morgenstern and I also enjoyed some academic interaction with Fritz Machlup. I did not work on any specific aspect of tourism

economics but I wrote a paper (which was published, Tisdell, 1966) which dealt with aspects of game theory, for which I later found some applications in relation to tourism economics. Morgenstern was very supportive of my work. I also wrote a working paper on aspects of evolutionary economics and showed it to Professor Baumol who felt (probably correctly) that it did not have a lot to say. However, I did return to evolutionary economics (Tisdell, 1996a) and have considered evolutionary themes involving tourism in my work (Tisdell, 1991, Ch. 10; 2005, Ch. 10). My discussions with Professor Fritz Machlup were motivated by my interest in knowledge – its economic value and role in economic activity and development. This is a wide subject that has been of particular interest to the Austrian School of Economics. I cannot go into the details here but it includes the economics of research and development and innovation, science and technology policy as well as the role of knowledge in the co-ordination and management of economic activity. After I returned to lecture at the Australian National University in 1966, I received grants to undertake research on industrial research and development policy and studied, amongst other things, intellectual property rights. This research developed my interest in economic externalities and provided an opportunity for me in 1982 to obtain my first research grant to study specifically some economic features of tourism.

I received a stimulus in 1970 to begin a new line of enquiry when Professor Trevor Swan (one of the supervisors of my PhD thesis) rang me to say that he had seen a recently published theoretical article of mine. He said it was very good but why don't you do something different – this article involved an extension of ideas in my PhD thesis. I then decided that I would study ecological and environmental economics and by 1972 I was already publishing in this area and have not stopped since. This interest of mine in the environment and in natural resources provided an important bridge to the development of my interest in tourism economics, particularly my interest in the connections between nature, environments and tourism.

5. Professor of Economics at the University of Newcastle from mid-1972 to 1989

In mid-1972, I left my position as Reader in Economics at the Australian National University to take up a position as Professor of Economics at Newcastle University (NSW). It was during this period that my interest in tourism economics became well established. My research output continued to expand on a variety of fronts. Ecological economics, agricultural economics, the economics of research and development policies and science and technology policies all held my interest. I wrote some papers relating to the value of national parks from a recreational point of view (for example, Tisdell, 1974, 1977) and published a major work entitled *Wild Pigs: Environmental Pest or Economic Resource?* which included some material on the recreational hunting of wild pigs (Tisdell, 1982) and at about the same, time published a few articles on recreational hunting. However, I did not obtain a real breakthrough in the development of my emerging research interest in tourism economics until 1982.

About this time, Dr. Ken Tucker of the Research School of Asian and Pacific Studies of the Australian National University approached me about the possibility of participating in the ASEAN-Australian Joint (Economic) Research Project. He was the Australian organizer of research on the service (tertiary) sector and he was keen to have a contribution from me dealing with industrial R&D. From the early 1970s onwards, I had written extensively on the subject and had a book published in 1981 on science and technology policy (Tisdell, 1981). However, I thought it was time to move on to a new subject and I proposed to him that I should focus on tourism; a different service. He was reluctant at first but accepted the idea and I received a grant (covering 1982 and 1983) to study “Natural (and related) resources and the generation of international tourism in Australia and ASEAN countries” The results were published in a project paper (Tisdell, 1984c) with parts of the results being published in journal articles (for example, Tisdell, 1983a, 1983b; Tisdell, 1984a).

The research grant from the ASEAN-Australian Joint Research Project set me firmly on my journey in exploring tourism economics. While in the remainder of my stay at

Newcastle, I did not receive any major grant to concentrate on tourism economics, a number of opportunities arose which enabled me to continue my research interest in tourism economics. Sometimes I could include some consideration of tourism as part of my wider project. For example, I received a research grant as part of the Australian Research Grants Scheme to study the “World Conservation Strategy and the Economics of Conservation”. One aspect of this strategy was the view that wildlife tourism should be promoted in developing countries to provide them with economic incentives to conserve wildlife. Therefore, I gave some consideration to this aspect (Tisdell, 1991, Ch. 4; 2005, Ch. 4).

In 1984, I received support from the East-West Center (Environmental and Policy Institute) for a project and in 1986 from the Resource Systems Institute of this Center in Hawaii for another project. The former project was my first opportunity to consider marine turtles and dugongs (Tisdell, 1986b). After coming to Brisbane, I subsequently did much research on turtles and tourism and also completed a paper about the conservation of dugongs (Tisdell, 1999b). In the second project, I focused on marine-based tourism in Southeast Asia and Australia and coordinated the research of several contributors. Some of the results were included in an edited volume (Tisdell et al., 1988) published by the Institute of Industrial Economics and in a book edited by James Barney Marsh of the University of Hawaii (Tisdell et al., 1992).

During the 1980s, I became Director of the Institute of Industrial Economics at Newcastle University after its founding director (Professor Brian Johns) left to take up a government position in Canberra. I then expanded the interests of this institute to include tourism economics.

For a part of 1986, I was a Guest Investigator at the Marine Policy and Ocean Management Center, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, MA, USA. My work was partly funded by the Pew Foundation and I also obtained funds from the Johnson Endowment Fund to study marine policy in relation to marine resources and tourism management. I completed one paper with director of this centre (Tisdell and Broadus,

1989) and planned to write an article with him about economic aspects of tourism in the Galapagos Islands. However, he was far too busy to be able to contribute to that because apart from doing research, he had to manage the centre and continually seek funds from donors to help finance it. The strain must have been considerable and he died unfortunately of a heart attack not that long after I returned to Australia. I did, nevertheless, eventually complete an article about tourism in relation to the Galapagos (Tisdell, 1988c). Amongst other things, this led me to develop a critical view of the simplistic notions of tourism carrying capacity. Originally, however, I had in mind a rather different article: one to look at the demand for different tourist packages based on varied combinations of attributes or attractions. Later this type of analysis would become the focus of those studying choice experiments but I did not proceed down this path. As a result of my visit to Woods Hole, I also published an article about Antarctica (Tisdell, 1986a) but it was only after coming to Brisbane that I undertook a study of Antarctic tourism.

An important event for my progress with the economics of tourism also occurred when I was stationed at Woods Hole. I made a visit to Toronto to participate in a conference of the International Association of Social Economics and while there met Professor Yushi Mao. He was then Professor of American Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, an accomplished economist, and a visitor to Harvard University. After our initial meeting, we arranged to meet again in Boston and then in Woods Hole. We got along very well and when Professor Mao left after visiting me in Woods Hole, he said he would get me invited to China. He had noted my interest in tourism economics and arranged for an article of mine on this subject to be published in China in 1987 (Tisdell, 1987a). In 1988, I received an invitation from the President of Nankai University in Tianjin, China, to come and teach tourism economics to a postgraduate class; an opportunity which I took up in 1989.

Meanwhile at Newcastle University, I was expanding postgraduate studies in economics. Several PhD students arrived from developing countries and one, Rajasundrum Sathiendrakumar (who actually came from the UK after studying at Manchester

University) decided to write his thesis on the role of tourism and fisheries in the development of the Maldives. He was my first PhD student to include tourism as a component of his research – others did so later. We published several articles about the development of tourism in the Maldives (for example, Sathiendrakumar and Tisdell, 1985; 1989). I became interested in the development of tourism in small economies and have continued that interest.

In 1988, I was fortunate to be invited to the Economics Department at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. On this occasion, I was awarded the position of William Evans Visiting Professor of the University of Otago. While in Dunedin, I observed that the royal albatross on the Otago Peninsula had become an important tourist attraction and that yellow-eyed penguins were increasing in significance as tourist attractions. I, therefore, decided to do some research on the economic impacts of this tourism and its potential, and I was invited to present a paper on this subject at the Otago Museum (Tisdell, 1988a). Little did I know that 20 years later that I would be invited back to Dunedin by the Yellow-Eyed Penguin Trust to do more research and update this paper for a conference to mark the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust.

During the latter part of my stay in Newcastle, Professor David McKee of Kent State University, Ohio, came to visit me and then he came back again not long after I moved to Brisbane. He convinced me to be the co-author of *Development Issues in Small Island Economies* and to contribute material dealing with issues in tourism development in small island economies (McKee and Tisdell, 1990).

6. A Digression on Sustainable Tourism

Because of the way in which my interest in sustainable tourism developed and straddled my stay in Newcastle and in Brisbane, it is convenient to outline, as a side issue, how that interest arose. Around the mid-1980s, I started exploring the concepts of sustainable development and economic sustainability and was an early contributor to discussions of

these subjects. For example, I presented a seminar paper at the University of New England on sustainable development and this was subsequently published in *World Development* (Tisdell, 1988b). During my interesting visit to South Africa in 1984 as guest of the South African Department of National Education, I developed the economics sustainability theme further and published additional articles on this subject. The subject of economic sustainability became a continuing interest of mine and had an influence on my thinking about tourism economics. This is reflected, for example, in my article 'Tourism, the environment and profit' (Tisdell, 1987b) and in (Tisdell, 1988c) and several subsequent publications; for example, in Chapter 10 of *Economics of Environmental Conservation* (Tisdell, 1991, 2005). The first edition of this book was based, to a significant extent, on my lectures developed for Environmental Economics at Newcastle University but it was not published until after I transferred to The University of Queensland.

In the mid-1990s I began exploring the subject of ecotourism as a possible way to achieve simultaneously environmental conservation and economic sustainability. Several of the papers resulting from this research are reprinted in Tisdell (2001). They included articles prompted by my visits to China (Tisdell, 1996b) and by my visits to Brazil (1998), mainly to the University of Pernambuco in Recife, Brazil. Much of my more recent work on tourism economics continues to be motivated by sustainability issues, particularly efforts to achieve specific goals relating to environmental and ecological sustainability. For example, relationships between tourism and nature conservation, including conservation of biodiversity, remain important issues for me.

7. Professor of Economics at The University of Queensland (1989-2004)

In 1988, I was 'headhunted' for the position of Professor of Economics at The University of Queensland. Not long after this offer came, Bond University also tried to recruit me as Professor of Decision Sciences. At the interview for this position, the selection committee was, amongst other things, particularly supportive of my interest in tourism economics. In any event, I decided to take the position at The University of Queensland in Brisbane

starting in February 1989. It was expected that I would immediately take over as Head of the Economics Department – I had considerable experience in that regard having been departmental head at Newcastle University for ten years. However, an opportunity for me to visit China in the first half of 1989 had evolved. Apart from the invitation to come to give lectures in tourism economics at Nankai University (Tianjin) in the first part of 1989 (a consequence of my meeting with Professor Yushi Mao in America), the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia provided me with a grant to establish contacts with the Chinese Academy of Social Science. This was an opportunity too good to miss. Dr. George Kenwood kindly agreed to stay on as Head of the Economics Department at The University of Queensland for another six months. Therefore, I was given permission to go to China by The University of Queensland to lecture at Nankai University and establish contacts in China.

I enjoyed my stay in China and lecturing there on tourism economics, despite the political unrest at the time due to the democracy movement. In a way, however, this unrest also added to my excitement, despite the unfortunate events that eventually unfolded. I found my students to be enquiring and bright, particularly Julie J. Wen who would later come to Australia and complete a PhD focusing on tourism and China's development. As a result of my visit, I began writing and publishing papers on tourism in China, some jointly with Julie Wen. In 1993, I published a book based on my lectures in China (which not only included my lectures in Tianjin but elsewhere in China). Chapter 12 of this book (Tisdell, 1993) is entitled "Foreign Tourism: Benefits to China and Contributions to Development" and contains some original ideas. After returning to Australia, I looked for further opportunities to do research on economic aspects of tourism development in China.

Having completed a study at the request of the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) on the economics of giant clam culture (which included a small component on tourism and this culture), ACIAR was supportive of my request to undertake another project. Some funding was obtained for the period 1993-95 for the project "Economic impact and rural adjustment to nature conservation (biodiversity)

programmes: A case study of Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan”. Research was conducted in co-operation with the Southwest Forestry College in Kunming and, amongst other things, attention was given to the development of ecotourism in Xishuangbanna State Nature Reserve and its economic impact on local communities. Several publications emerged, a number of which were jointly authored by Xiang Zhu, my Chinese co-researcher. In addition a number of chapters in Tisdell (1999a) drew on results from this research. Also as a result of this experience, I recommended to Julie Wen when she came to The University of Queensland to complete a PhD that she include Yunnan as one of the important foci of her study of tourism development in China which she did. Eventually, this study resulted in a jointly authored book (Wen and Tisdell, 2001).

Beginning in the early 1990s, I became interested in India’s economic development and joined the International Institute of Development Studies (IIDS) headquartered in Calcutta as a life-time member. My colleague, Dr. Kartik Roy, was active in IIDS. A conference was organized in Bhubaneswar, Orissa, India in 1987 focusing on tourism and development generally as well as on tourism development in India. This resulted in the publication of two edited books (Roy and Tisdell, 1998; Tisdell and Roy, 1998). I was surprised to learn recently from a website that one of these books (Tisdell and Roy, 1998, *Tourism and Development*) is one of my books held by a very large number of libraries.

From 1994 onwards, I was fortunate to receive several relatively modest grants to support my research and wildlife-based tourism. In the period 1994-95, a grant was received in conjunction with Derrin Davis to study “Recreational scuba diving in marine protected areas: Impacts, economics and management”. Derrin and myself completed several joint papers on this subject and Derrin Davis completed a PhD thesis based on this study. Another PhD student (Darrian Collins) had commenced by 2000 studying the socio-economics of outbound tourism from Australia. There was no specific funding for this research but it resulted in several joint publications (for example, Collins and Tisdell, 2002). Collins’ thesis was entirely focused on tourism. Earlier Biman Prasad, another PhD scholar, had included tourism as part of his study of development issues in Fiji and a

revised and updated version of this research was published in 2006 (Prasad and Tisdell, 2006). I was also able to convince Ranjith Bandara (who came from Sri Lanka to complete a PhD) to take an interest in aspects of tourism in Sri Lanka and we published several articles jointly as well as a book (Bandara and Tisdell, 2010). I developed a particular interest in elephant orphanages as tourist attractions and we considered their role in the conservation of Asian elephants (Tisdell and Bandara, 2009). So along with my PhD students, I remained very active in studying topics in tourism economics.

In 2000, I had a visit from China by Dr. Dayuan Xue. He is a natural scientist with a special interest in biodiversity conservation. At the time, he was convinced that insufficient consideration was being given to non-material and non-use values in the conservation of nature in China. He proposed a joint paper to examine the tourist and biodiversity value of a biosphere reserve in China. This was published in *Tourism Economics* (Xue et al., 2000) and was selected for the *Tourism Economics* Award for Journal Article Excellence in the year 2000. In the letter accompanying the announcement of the award in 2001, it is stated “among the criteria used in making the Award are the value of the papers’ contribution to original research, the quality of its argument, the coherence and concision of its presentation, and its contributions to the academic reputation of the journal”.

In 2001, I was fortunate to be a Visiting Professor at the University of Zurich, Switzerland, jointly in the Institute of Environmental Science and the Department of Geography. During that time, one of my contributions was to give lectures to students on tourism and the environment. This was the second opportunity I had to lecture on aspects of tourism and it helped to maintain my interest in tourism and the environment.

From 2000 onwards, I received a couple of relatively small but very useful grants as Principal Researcher from the CRC for Sustainable Tourism. These gave me my first opportunity (as principal researcher) to collect *primary* data in Australia relating to the economics of nature-based tourism. Although a shared grant was received from the CRC for Sustainable Tourism to study the role of economics in managing wildlife tourism, the

funds were utilized by Derrin Davis and it was essentially a desktop study. As it transpired, I had to complete the CRC report for this study because Derrin left academia suddenly.

Dr. Clevo Wilson joined the School of Economics at The University of Queensland as a Postdoctoral Fellow in 2000 and we began joint research on the economics of nature-based tourism. He participated in the 'sea turtles and ecotourism' project (2000) and in the 'economics of wildlife tourism' project (2001-2004) both of which were funded by the CRC for Sustainable Tourism. The research made use of surveys of visitors to tourist attractions – the Mon Repos turtle rookery near Bundaberg, Lamington National Park, the Antarctic Peninsula and studied glow worms as attractions at Springbrook National Park. The results of this research were published and two separate reports of the CRC for Sustainable Tourism (Tisdell and Wilson, 2002, 2004).

In this period 2001-2002, I was also involved as a joint researcher in a project funded by the University of Brunei where I had established several contacts as an external advisor. I did write some articles related to this project (for example, Tisdell, 2003) but the project did not proceed as planned because the leading researcher from the University of Brunei was transferred to a public service position outside the university. This resulted in the cessation of the project. The University of Brunei is operated as a part of Brunei's public service system.

By 2001, I was keen to do research on the economics of conserving Australia's tropical wildlife. The University of Queensland gave me and Clevo Wilson a grant in 2002 to undertake preliminary research on this subject and to prepare a submission to The Australian Research Council for a Discovery Grant. This application (with Dr. Clevo Wilson) for a Discovery Grant to provide funding in the period 2003-2006 for the project "Economics of conserving Australian tropical wildlife: An analysis of the role of economic valuations, property rights and commercialisation" was successful. This was an important grant for me because it enabled primary data collection and theory to be combined. We included a tourism component in the research proposal but as a subsidiary

(but not insignificant) theme. We had to obtain a covering letter from the Director of the CRC for Sustainable Tourism to state that this component did not overlap to any significant extent with the mission of this CRC. Presumably, this was to stop ‘double-dipping’ for funds. This funding was useful for sustaining my research (for a limited period of time) after I became Professor Emeritus in 2005.

Apart from the books already mentioned, two books concentrating on tourism economics appeared in this period. Edward Elgar approached me to compile and edit a book on tourism economics for his Critical Writings in Economics series. This involved surveying the literature on tourism economics and selecting articles that, in my view, had played a pivotal role in the development of tourism economics (Tisdell, 2000b). It was a challenging task but it did provide me with a comprehensive overview of the development of tourism economics. I decided not to include many of my own articles in that collection because I did not want to take advantage of my editorial position and I was not sure that any were really of critical importance for the development of tourism economics. In any case, a year later, Edward Elgar published a collection of my essays in *Tourism Economics, the Environment and Development* in 2001 (Tisdell, 2001). This has proven to be one of the most popular of my books and is stocked by many libraries globally.

8. Professor Emeritus – 2005 and beyond

My academic life did not stop when my status changed from Professor of Economics to Professor Emeritus at The University of Queensland. The fact that I no longer had to attend meetings, respond to bureaucratic reporting and give lectures gave me more time for my research and writing. The down side was that I had fewer resources to support these activities. Nevertheless, the Discovery Grant from the Australian Research Council continued for a couple of years after my status changed. While many of the discoveries made possible by that grant were published, much of the primary data relating to tourism economics only became available towards the end of funding for this research. At that time, remaining funds were insufficient to enable papers to be completed using this data.

However, this year (2010), I have revisited these data and have started writing up the results for some chapters for a manuscript to be published by Edward Elgar (namely C.A. Tisdell and C. Wilson, “The Economics of Nature-based Tourism and Conservation”) which should be completed this year. Finishing my contribution to this manuscript is one of my main projects at present. Some of the findings will be supportive of tourism economics based on behavioural economics and critical of some models of tourist decision-making based on neoclassical economics.

In 2005, I completed a second edition of the *Economics of Environmental Conservation*, which included a chapter on tourism and the environment. This edition was given the Choice Award of the American Libraries’ Association in January, 2007. Edward Elgar had also requested me to edit another book in his International Library of Critical Writings in Economics Series; one dealing with the economics of leisure. This book, in two volumes, (Tisdell, 2006) was intended to complement my other book, *The Economics of Tourism* (Tisdell, 2000b) in this series. It was a difficult project because I found many gaps in the economic literature dealing with this subject. For example, there was little or no coverage by economists of significant leisure activities (such as the economics of gardening as a hobby nor of the keeping of pets) and the economics of industries that cater for leisure activities had been neglected by economists, as I noted in my overview of *The Economics of Leisure*.

In 2006, I visited Mauritius to participate in a workshop arranged by professors from the University of La Réunion (notably Jacques-Marie Aurifeille and Serge Svizzero) with whom I had had previous contacts. During that time, I gave three lectures to undergraduate students at the University of Mauritius dealing with environmental issues. One was on tourism economics. The students seemed very interested in these lectures and took the opportunity following the lectures to discuss with me topics raised during the lectures.

In 2007, I unexpectedly received an invitation from the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust (New Zealand) to update my 1988 study of the development of wildlife-based tourism on the

Otago Peninsula, particularly in relation to the yellow-eyed penguins (Tisdell, 1988a) and to prepare a paper for presentation at a conference to mark the 20th anniversary of the trust. I was most enthusiastic about this update and it provided me with some new insights about tourism economics (Tisdell, 2007b, 2007c, 2009).

My latest assignments are to write a keynote address for the 3rd Australian Wildlife Tourism Conference to be held 1-3 September 2010, to make progress in preparing a “Handbook on Tourism Economics” and to finish my contribution to the manuscript for *The Economics of Nature-based Tourism and Conservation*.

9. Why have I found Tourism Economics Exciting and Valuable?

Forty years ago, when I first began exploring my interest in economics and the conservation of nature, I had no idea that it would result in my discovery of tourism economics and lead to the journey I have taken so far. In recent years, exploring tourism economics has become a passion, a hobby and one might well say, virtually an obsession. Although I never have had large research grants for projects exploring tourism economics, as time went on, I did get sufficient funding to do field work and collect primary data and do other than desktop studies. This gave me the opportunity to use direct observations to assess and develop theories. I enjoy this and find it exciting, especially as some of the results of this research are supportive of new developments in economic theory, such as those associated with behavioural economics and psychological economics, bounded rationality and transaction cost theory.

Tourism economics has also appealed to me because of its interdisciplinary nature, the considerable scope it provides for heterodox approaches to problem solving, and especially the openings it gives to me to communicate with non-specialists. My discovery of tourism economics has enabled me to explore a wide range of issues, for instance in microeconomics, welfare economics, international economics and development economics. Furthermore, I have become increasingly aware of the limitations of mainstream economic methods of valuation of resource use, the multidimensional nature

of valuation and the limitations of human reasoning in resolving valuation issues. This is not to say that no progress in these matters is possible but we should be humble in assessing our achievements.

As a result of my interest in tourism economics, I have been able to visit so many interesting and diverse places. These include Xishuangbanna in China, (staying in forestry camps travelling to the Laotian border and meeting local minority groups), the Sundarbans in Bangladesh and India, parts of Orissa, the natural attractions of Brunei, the Otago Peninsula in New Zealand and much more. Very often one small encounter sparks curiosity and leads to more research. For example, on a visit to Brunei, I once saw a troupe of proboscis monkeys at sunrise in the tree tops on a mangrove-fringed island in the bay near the Sultan's Palace. These are one of the wildlife attractions of Brunei. Later, I co-authored an article about the conservation of proboscis monkeys and orangutans (Tisdell and Swarna Nantha, 2008) and have become involved in research studying the economics of conserving the orangutan. As in the mathematics of chaos, one small incident can alter the evolution of thought and research and result in its following an unpredicted and unpredictable path. This adds to the excitement that comes from exploring unexpected ideas and creates diversity in thought which in turn generates enthusiasm.

10. Concluding Comments

So you can see that for me the discovery of tourism economics and my journey in this field has both been exciting and valuable to me. The nice thing about the area is that there is still a lot to discover so there is still plenty of room for others to obtain the excitement of discovery in this field.

It might be observed that I have never taught tourism economics, except as a guest lecturer. This is because I have always been employed in departments (schools) of economics and normally this field is believed to be too specialized to be part of their curriculum. The teaching of the subject usually occurs in schools of tourism and

recreation. Nevertheless, tourism economics could be a valuable elective if made available in some schools of economics. I must, however, admit that if I had been expected to teach the subject on a regular basis, it would probably have jaded my appetite for exploring tourism economics. It would have no longer been a hobby and a spontaneous interest. Had I been required to teach tourism economics regularly, I would probably have lost my enthusiasm for tourism economics, especially since in academia considerable external supervision and monitoring (management?) of courses, in the name of accountability, has occurred. While accountability is, in principle, a good thing, it involves costs: it limits experimentation and invention and generates transaction costs. As a result, the generation of new ideas is adversely impacted and the effective amount of funds available for research in fields, such as tourism economics, is reduced because the costs of administration eat up a large segment of the funding pie. There is a danger that the same malady may beset modern universities as Joseph Schumpeter (1942) predicted might happen to large business companies as market economies develop, namely that they will be crippled by bureaucracy.

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