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## Foreword

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**Biographical notes:** Philip Lawn received a PhD in Economics from Griffith University in Brisbane. He is currently a Senior Lecturer in Environmental and Ecological Economics at Flinders University. Over the past eight years, he has published a number of papers on ecological economics issues as well as a book entitled *Toward Sustainable Development* (2000) and an edited volume called *Sustainable Development Indicators in Ecological Economics* (2006). A new book entitled *Frontier Issues in Ecological Economics* is due for release in early 2007. He is presently working on green national accounting as well as calculating the Genuine Progress Indicator for India, Denmark and the Australian state of Queensland.

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## 1 Introduction

The Canadian Society for Ecological Economics' 2005 conference, *Windows of Opportunities for Advancing Ecological Economics*, was held at York University, Toronto, in October 2005. The conference brought together 260 scholars, researchers, activists, students and decision-makers from across Canada and the world who engaged in a rich programme of plenaries, parallel sessions and other events.

Some of the ambitious aims and objectives of the conference included:

- Facilitating the transfer of knowledge across disciplinary boundaries by integrating into the programme an interdisciplinary, multigenerational and bilingual (English/French) group of scholars spanning various themes within the social sciences, humanities and natural sciences.
- Identifying and developing research opportunities by, firstly, highlighting knowledge gaps within the various areas of ecological economics represented in the conference programme and secondly, disseminating these results via the conference website and special issues of the *Journal of Bioeconomics* and the *International Journal of Environment, Workplace and Employment*.
- Enhancing the profile and visibility of ecological economics research in Canada by demonstrating its importance to a conference audience significantly represented by the public, private and non-profit sectors within Canada and from abroad.
- Cultivating student research capacity and scholarly presentation experience by:
  - integrating student and non-student presentations in sessions
  - including students on the organising committee
  - minimising student registration fees and
  - prioritising funding to students and recent graduates.

The conference programme incorporated 84 presentations into 33 sessions. The session themes focused on steady-state macroeconomics, tourism, thermodynamics, bioeconomics, nature as capital, ecological fiscal reform, ecological economics education, ethics and values, governance, feminist approaches to ecological economics, green consumerism, indicators and the role of money and banking. Because of the high quality of presentations and the openness of discussion, it was generally agreed that all the conference objectives were successfully achieved – a credit not only to the conference participants, but the CANSEE 2005 Organising Committee. A special mention must also be made of Eric Miller, the Conference Secretariat, whose tireless efforts ensured a well run and, importantly, a ‘carbon neutral’ conference.

The papers included in this special conference issue of *IJEWE* were chosen not only to represent the various conference themes and objectives but also to reflect the emphasis on student and public sector participation. For those unfamiliar with *IJEWE*, its central aim is to reconcile the potential conflict between the ecological sustainability and full employment objectives. While all the papers focus on environmental concerns, the extent to which they deal with the employment issue varies considerably across the papers. Having said this, I believe they collectively represent a valuable contribution to the advancement of ecological economics and the movement to a more sustainable, equitable and efficient world for all.