

Candidate Statement – Dr Risti Permani
Nominee for AARES President-Elect



I am a Senior Lecturer in Agribusiness at the University of Queensland's School of Agriculture and Food Sustainability and have been a member of AARES since 2010, when I began my postdoctoral research in agricultural economics at the University of Adelaide. I hold a PhD and Master of Economics from the University of Adelaide and have remained an active contributor to the Society ever since—regularly participating in the Queensland seminar series, mentoring students, and bringing my PhD candidates to the AARES Annual Conference. Two of my students won Best First-Time Presenter awards in 2024 and 2025, reflecting my commitment to nurturing the next generation of agricultural economists.

Over the past 15 years, I have held academic, policy, and leadership roles in Australia and internationally. Prior to joining UQ, I was a Senior Lecturer at Deakin University, where I led agribusiness teaching and engagement initiatives. Between 2016 and 2018, I served as Assistant Director at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, delivering research programs in support of ASEAN economic integration and servicing the RCEP negotiations between ASEAN and its trading partners, including Australia.

My research spans food system resilience, food and nutrition security, agricultural trade, and digital innovation in agriculture across Australia and Asia, including a transdisciplinary DFAT-KONEKSI funded project (2023-2026) on inclusive and sustainable food system resilience in peri-urban Java, bringing together more than 20 researchers across eight Australian and Indonesian institutions and disciplines, ranging from economics and agribusiness to nutrition, climate science, policy, gender, and community development. At UQ, I serve as Program Director for the Bachelor of Agribusiness, one of the country's largest undergraduate agribusiness programs. I also sit on the Board of Directors for the Centre for Indonesian Policy Studies (CIPS) and represent international partnerships for PERHEPI, the Indonesian Agricultural Economics Association.

I have designed and delivered large-scale events and training programs, including co-facilitated the 2025 AARES Pre-Conference Workshop on "a systems thinking approach to advancing food and nutrition system resilience" attended by over 70 professionals, and multiple international development programs at UQ as a course leader, including Australia Awards "Inclusive Leadership in STEM (Indonesia, 2025)", "Women in STEM (Mongolia, 2024)", "Climate-smart Agriculture for Healthy and Sustainable Food Production (Indonesia, 2025)", and the upcoming "Women's Leadership and Innovations in Food, Agriculture and Nutrition Systems (Indonesia)" in October 2025. These programs have reached over 200 emerging leaders across the Indo-Pacific and broader region.

My vision as **President-Elect** is to strengthen AARES's leadership across research, teaching, and engagement in the agricultural, environmental, food, resource-economics and agribusiness (AEFREA) fields through three key priorities that directly support the Society's [2024–2028 Strategic Plan](#).

1. Enhancing Teaching Excellence and Early Career Development

To address sector-wide workforce shortages and ensure the long-term vibrancy of agricultural and resource economics, I aim to broaden AARES's engagement beyond HDR and EMCR members to also include tertiary education students and educators. With six jobs available for every agriculture graduate in Australia, our Society has a vital role to play in supporting future-ready teaching and leadership development across academia, industry, and government. This supports Theme 3 of the Strategic Plan by expanding early career development pathways and also aligns with Theme 2 through improved translation of research into impactful learning experiences. I see opportunities to collaborate with groups like the Australian Council of Deans of Agriculture to support implementation of [National Threshold Learning Outcomes for Agriculture](#) (noting the inclusion of agribusiness and economics as the sub-disciplines in the document) and to host webinars, special conference sessions, and curriculum innovation initiatives.

2. Expanding Global Partnerships and Conference Participation

AARES can grow its influence by expanding its international partnerships, including with Southeast Asia and the broader Indo-Pacific, regions with strong shared interests in agri-food systems while continuing our partnerships with Europe, North and Latin America. Building on my policy and research networks in the region, I will work to strengthen international collaboration, encourage participation at the AARES Annual Conference, and expand the diversity of contributors to AJARE. This will support Theme 1 (Annual Conference) by increasing global engagement, Theme 2 (Journal) through wider dissemination of applied economics research, and Theme 4 (Networking Opportunities) by enriching cross-regional connections.

3. Advancing GEDSI and Building a Sustainable, Inclusive Society

AARES's long-term sustainability depends on being an inclusive, welcoming, and representative Society. Drawing on my leadership in multiple international development programs focused on inclusive leadership, I will support efforts to embed gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) more deeply across AARES activities. I will also advocate for dedicated leadership development opportunities for women, EMCRs, and researchers from underrepresented backgrounds. This directly contributes to Theme 5 of the Strategic Plan by fostering member engagement, attracting new volunteers, and ensuring AARES governance remains dynamic and future-focused. Partnering with organisations such as SAGE (Science in Australia Gender Equity), Women in Economics, ACIAR, and the Crawford Fund can help us build the next generation of leaders in AEFREA.

With more than 25 countries represented at the 2025 Brisbane conference, AARES is well placed to further strengthen its international, forward-looking and inclusive identity continuing our meaningful contribution to research and broader societal, economic, environmental and partnership outcomes.

I would be honoured to serve and help lead this next phase of our Society's growth.